JANUARY 1958

# COMMENTARY

Past and Present in America — DANIEL J. BOORSTIN

Clash of Two Immigrant Generations — BOGDAN RADITSA

Western Illusions About the Middle East — ELIE KEDOURIE

Israel's Arab Minority — WALTER SCHWARZ

The Sephardim of New Lots — LEONARD PLOTNIK

By Cozzens Possessed — DWIGHT MACDONALD

Four Poems

King Herod as Oriental Monarch — MARTIN BRAUN

From the American Scene
Second Wife — DAVID BOROFF

Cedars of Lebanon
"God, the Torah, and Israel"

On the Horizon
Freud the Philosopher — HANS MEYERHOFF

The Study of Man
Union Democracy and the Public Good — PAUL JACOBS

BOOKS IN REVIEW

Maurice J. Goldbloom — Irving Howe — Milton R. Konvitz

Edouard Roditi — A. V. Sherman

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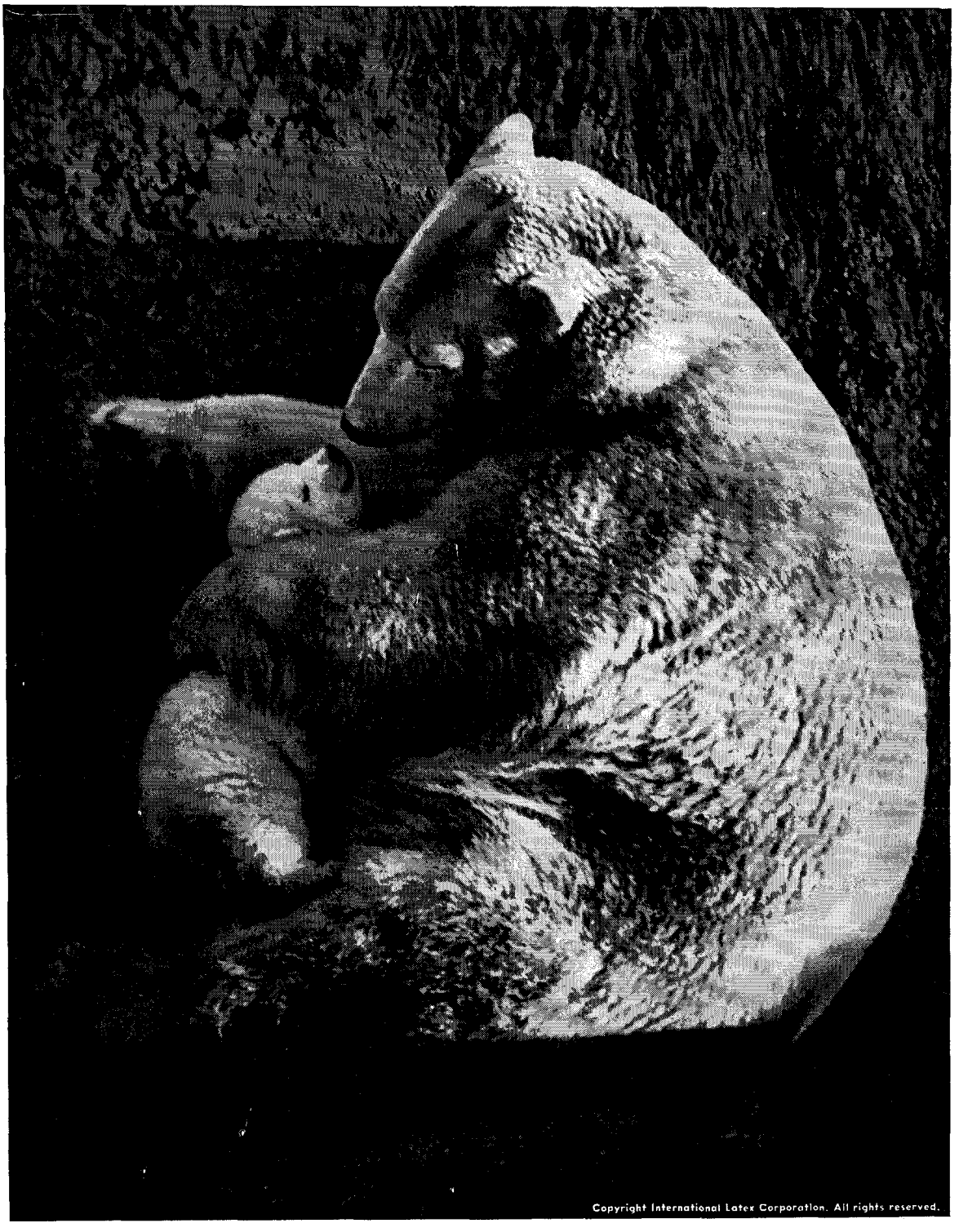


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IN FORTHCOMING ISSUES OF

# COMMENTARY

**Washington in Search of a Policy** *Oscar Gass*

Recent events have given additional importance to the question of improving U.S. relations with allied and non-committed countries, notably in the economic field. The Eisenhower administration's record in this respect is critically examined by an experienced economist.

**Israel and the Diaspora** *Oscar Handlin*

The distinguished American historian reflects on the present crisis in Zionist ideology, as mirrored in last summer's "Ideological Conference" in Jerusalem, and calls for an attitude of mutual acceptance on the part of the Jews of Israel and the Diaspora.

**New York City Politics and the Puerto Ricans** *Dan Wakefield*

Though there are more than 500,000 Puerto Ricans in New York City, none is on the City Council. A young journalist takes us behind the scenes of the unsuccessful effort of José Lumen Roman, running on the Liberal party ticket, to win a seat on the Council.

**Messianism in 19th-Century France** *J. L. Talmon*

The part played by Jewish intellectuals in the early socialist movement in France has not hitherto been given much attention. Professor J. L. Talmon finds occasion to throw new light on the origins and ideology of the Saint-Simonist school and the quasi-religious tendencies affiliated with it.

**The Inarticulate Hero in American Culture** *Robert S. Brustein*

A young literary critic explores the roots and significance of the new type of hero in American films and plays—a type embodied in such figures as Marlon Brando and expressed in the acting style developed by the influential Actors Studio.

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# COMMENTARY

## PAST AND PRESENT IN AMERICA

### *A Historian Visits Colonial Williamsburg*

**DANIEL J. BOORSTIN**

AFTER having heard for many years about "Colonial Williamsburg" and having read the attractive advertisements in the *New Yorker* inviting families to come down for a vacation weekend at Williamsburg Inn and Lodge, I finally had an opportunity to visit the place myself. Some of my fellow historians, especially those who had never been there, had been pretty supercilious about Mr. Rockefeller's project, supported by about fifty million dollars of his money and by a great deal of his personal enthusiasm, to restore and reconstruct an American colonial capital. Some called it simply another example—like William Randolph Hearst's notorious imported castles—of a wealthy man indulging his whims; others dismissed it as another educational "gadget" like the audio-visual aids which have had such short shrift from respectable historians. Still others, those most thoroughly schooled in European historical scholarship, treated it as a harmless but amusing example of American vulgarity—a kind of patriotic Disneyland.

But I found, after a first visit to Colonial Williamsburg, and then a second visit to confirm my impressions, that I could not share any of these condescending views. On the contrary, as I reflected on what I had seen, I came to suspect that Colonial Williamsburg was more significant than my colleagues had imagined—and significant even in some ways which the promoters themselves did not advertise. Colonial Williamsburg came to seem to me a symbol of what distinguishes our American attitude to our national past from that of people in other parts of the world.

There is a vivid and obvious difference between this way of searching for the past, and the European ways familiar to anyone who has been a student or a tourist over there. Colonial Williamsburg is a more democratic kind of national monument; it presumes a much less specialized and much less aristocratic kind of education. Unless one already knows a great deal, one cannot learn much from visiting the Roman Forum or the Athenian Acropolis. The Capitoline Museum, the Prado, or the National Gallery in London, seems a jungle of canvas and marble to anyone not already instructed in the different arts and periods represented. Each room or department preserves the

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DANIEL J. BOORSTIN, who speculates in this present article on the meaning of the past for the American spirit, as contrasted with the European attitude to monuments, museums, and history, is associate professor of history at the University of Chicago and a frequent contributor. He is the author of *The Genius of American Politics* and *The Lost World of Thomas Jefferson,* among other works.



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relics of only one kind of art, and usually of that art in only a single period. The European museum is a pretty esoteric place. The untutored visitor who usually cannot even find a comfortable place for sitting considers himself lucky if he remembers the name of the museum. The numerous palace-museums—like the Louvre, Hampton Court, the Uffizi, the Pitti, or Schoenbrunn—are not any more comfortable, although they may be more interesting because they at least show the common visitor where the rich and powerful used to live. All such places are planned and maintained primarily for the connoisseur, the art collector, the patron, the professor, or the scholar, not for the citizen. Only in Pompeii (which was made by catastrophe and not on purpose, and which is usually considered a curiosity rather than a major cultural monument), can the unlearned, children, and laymen without a cultivated historical imagination, feel interested and at home.

But Colonial Williamsburg is a place where people often go "because of the children." And because it offers not a segment of the history of a particular fine art, but a model of a going community, it is intelligible and interesting to nearly everybody. Nobody is a specialist in daily life! It is a symbol of a culture where the fine arts have become much less important; where literacy is a higher ideal than literariness. The forbidding ribbon across the antique chair, the "Do Not Touch" sign, the somnolent guard (whose only qualification is that he is a disabled war veteran)—these omnipresent features of the European museum have nothing to do with the American restored community. One of the most startling and impressive facts to anyone who has "done" Europe, is that the guides of Colonial Williamsburg have no set speeches, and are actually giving the visitor their own interpretation of the current lectures on colonial life, which the Director of Interpretation expects them to attend. Visitors have some sense of using what the colonials themselves used; they see how things worked.

A Colonial Williamsburg would be impossible in a country that was not wealthy. It is made for the prosperous millions; for the "middling sort" of Americans; for a nation of paved roads and automobile owners and well-paid vacations, for a child-centered, newspaper-reading nation where families do things together. Colonial Williamsburg—like the American spelling bee, the strenuous effort to make college a "fun" experience, John Dewey's project method of education, educational television shows, and quiz shows—symbolizes the American refusal to segregate any kind of activity: the refusal to believe that education need be a chore, or that learning need be confined to solemn and studious hours. Business and pleasure *ought* to be combined. Colonial Williamsburg did not acquire its fully American character until the vast motel (with cafeteria and swimming pool) and information center (offering free films about the colonial period) began to be used last summer. Americans like to learn together, they like to enjoy their education. For all these purposes Colonial Williamsburg is perfectly suited, and in a way which has no parallel.

How did so appropriate an expression of national culture ever come into being? It was not the product of government initiative. Beginning partly as an imaginative private whim, it could not have been accomplished without shrewd real-estate dealings, architectural ingenuity, applied archaeology, and effective public relations. It is a spectacular example of private enterprise at work in the creation of a national monument. Over thirty years ago, Dr. W. A. R. Goodwin, a single-minded Episcopal minister who loved Williamsburg, conceived the idea and fired the imagination of Mr. John D. Rockefeller, Jr., who not only paid for it, but became foster father of the idea. It is not the product of legislative or other committees, of log-rolling or boondoggling, but of a few individuals who had a queer and "impossible" idea. "Money was no object." On one occasion when a particular house, already partly reconstructed, had

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been built a few feet from its precise original position, Mr. Rockefeller did not hesitate to spend six thousand dollars to have it moved to its proper spot. Yet in the midst of the restored village one finds a few islands which have been left to their owners, because the Committee has considered the prices asked for the property to be exorbitant. The Virginia legislature has cooperated, local historical societies have helped. But Colonial Williamsburg vividly exemplifies the paradox that only in a wealthy country can people care little about money.

Colonial Williamsburg is an American kind of sacred document. It asserts the belief in the continuity of past and present. Such an attempt to reconstruct the way of life of a whole past community and to interpret it to all living Americans is not only more expensive, but vastly more difficult and more taxing on the historical imagination, than to restore any particular ancient monument. The technical problems of archaeology have really turned out to be the least of all the problems; and a number of novel questions which Colonial Williamsburg has posed to its restorers have expressed some large peculiarities of American history.

The restorers of such a community must, in the first place, be willing to break out of respected academic conventions; they must be willing to risk the objections, and even the ridicule of pedants, and the misunderstanding of scholars, of self-styled sophisticates, and of cosmopolites who are accustomed to the very different monuments of Europe. They must not be afraid to be at the same time archaeological precisionists, dramatic producers, advertisers, and promoters; and even occasionally to look a little silly to the humorless academic eye. They must combine the techniques of Hollywood, Madison Avenue, Wall Street, and Schenectady with those of the universities, museums, and research libraries. This is an extraordinary concoction. But American culture is extraordinary; and anyone who would provide us our kind of national monument must not be afraid to mix things which elsewhere have not seemed to go together.

In the course of this effort, the builders and promoters of Colonial Williamsburg have encountered some temptations all their own.

1. *The temptation to make the past too homogeneous.* At any one time every community is actually a hodgepodge of the relics of different periods. The architectural "unity" of any period exists only in the minds of architectural historians. No age completely consumes its buildings; only in the oldest or the newest settlements, or after a great conflagration like the Fire of London or the Chicago Fire, or in some of our contemporary projects of urban renewal or in suburban Levittowns and Park Forests are whole areas constructed in a single style. Thus the look of a community in any particular period actually cannot be recaptured if its buildings illustrate only one style. The reconstructor's temptation is to be too pure; in his effort to catch the special flavor of one age he may forget the admixture of earlier ages which was vivid to the men who lived then. Even in Colonial Williamsburg this temptation has not been wholly resisted, if only in choosing "typical" buildings of the immediate pre-revolutionary period for restoration. In the code of restoration principles adopted at the beginning of the work in 1928, the advisory committee wisely recommended that "All buildings or parts of buildings in which the colonial tradition persists should be retained irrespective of their actual date." Ironically, the modern and unrestored parts of the village, by adding a note of variety, actually help us recover some of the heterogeneity of the once-living community.

But the very peculiarities of our history which focus our interest on the "middling sort" of men, put difficulties in the way of a fully appropriate restoration. The grander buildings tend to be the more durable; they are the ones for which we have blueprints, insurance records, and the detailed comments of colonial travelers. Yet to find the flavor of Williamsburg as an American community we must recapture the ways of living of craftsmen, servants, small business-

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men and others whose houses left the least trace. The restorers of Williamsburg are, of course, aware of this difficulty; and in their reconstruction of several craft shops they have made an effort to overcome it. But they are inevitably the victims of the ephemeral character of the life they are trying to recapture; a way of life is always more complex, more mixed, and more elusive than any particular grand monument.

2. *The temptation to make the past too pretty.* The restorer faces a dilemma: if he tries to camouflage his work by artificial weathering and machine-made wormholes, he becomes a kind of forger. But if he does not, he misleads the viewer by making the past seem too shipshape. The restorers of Williamsburg have followed the rule that "where new materials must be used, they should be of a character approximating the old as closely as possible, but no attempt should be made to 'antique' them by theatrical means." Walking through restored Williamsburg, one finds these authentic colonial buildings as neat and well painted as the houses in a newly developed suburb; while only buildings of jarring modern design look weathered and lived in. In a few years restored buildings will have a more lived-in look (many of the houses are occupied by the staff of Colonial Williamsburg and the Institute of Early American History and Culture); they will never have the shabbiness that many of them must have shown in the colonial era. But this fresh paint is a useful warning of the unbridgeable gulf between past and present. It has the same advantage as the specially colored plaster used in restoring European remains. The fresh paint and newly applied wallpaper which discomfit the romantic visitor actually can help save Colonial Williamsburg from the tea room "quaintness" often found along New England highways. To the colonials themselves, the buildings were, of course, anything but quaint. They wished a look of orderly newness (including a coat of expensive fresh paint) as much as we do today.

The same kind of difficulty is presented by the lack of odors which were among the most vivid sensations of any colonial town. Yet if somehow these odors could be recreated (as the restorers might conceivably try in a building or two), they would probably blot out everything else. We must remember that body odors, and odors of food, sewage, and cover-up perfume, were commonplace to the age. Any large-scale effort to reproduce colonial smells would seem melodramatic, and would actually destroy verisimilitude for 20th-century visitors. Odors were routine for Jefferson, Wythe, and their contemporaries; revived today they would seem more pungent and more offensive than they ever did to them. This is only one of the many ways in which even the most sensible and skillful restorer is doomed (by his very success as a 20th-century interpreter) to miss the precise aroma of colonial life.

3. *The temptation to make the past too relevant.* A good deal too much of the literature about Colonial Williamsburg tells us that the life of that day embodied the principles which we live by today. There is, of course, some truth in the explanation in the official guidebook of how "eighteenth-century Williamsburg embodied concepts of lasting importance to all men everywhere." The "five concepts" there listed include "the integrity of the individual," "responsible leadership," "self-government," "individual liberties," and "opportunity"; these were in one way or another actually expressed in the life of that Virginia town. But the Williamsburg experience ought to underline the dynamic and the federal character of American life, which is actually expressed in the differences between what each of these "concepts" meant to the citizens of Colonial Williamsburg and what they mean to us today, and even in the many little differences between their life and the life of their contemporaries in Boston or Philadelphia. To make Colonial Williamsburg the symbol of a bloodless, soilless abstraction—"World Freedom"—obscures many of the characteristic and permanently valuable features of Southern colonial in-

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stitutions. If Colonial Williamsburg is to serve its historical as well as its patriotic purpose, it must dramatize the uniqueness of Southern and of colonial, as much as of all American, institutions. This can best be accomplished by allowing the accurately restored community to speak for itself and to speak concretely and in detail. This purpose was best expressed by Mr. Rockefeller himself when he explained, "I wasn't trying to recreate a lovely city, nor was I interested in a collection of old houses. I was trying to recreate Williamsburg as it stood in the eighteenth century." This is a much more honest and feasible educational purpose than to make Colonial Williamsburg a didactic "example" of political abstractions.

In their very efforts to deal with these problems, the restorers of Colonial Williamsburg have told us a great deal more about America, past and present, than its founders ever imagined. If anyone had set out, thirty years ago, not to revive a colonial town, but to exemplify on a grand scale the American approach to the national past, he could hardly have done better.

For nearly every country in Europe, the past is the storehouse of greatness and romance, which declines into the prosaic, insoluble problems of the present. Aristocratic cultures recapture the glories of their history in the crumbling monuments of ancient castles, forts, and palaces. It becomes a patriotic act to leave the remains of that past in their surviving disarray. "There were giants in the earth in those days." Restoration would only cover up the masters' sure touch with the bungling brush strokes of latter-day amateurs. The ruins of the past must be left unrepaired because past magnificence (even in ruins) is more awe-inspiring than the glossy neatness of pigmy moderns. Better a sketch or a fragment by Michelangelo than a completed work by one of us. In Europe ruins inspire and stimulate the present with confidence in the national genius and an avenging hatred against the barbarian who destroyed the grandeur. They stir unfulfillable yearnings toward the ancient greatness. A ruined Forum is the best propaganda for a Mussolini—and much better than a working model of the Forum would have been: its every scar is a prod to national pride.

In older cultures nearly every monument was built from the half-crumbled ruins of earlier ones. The grand public buildings of the Forum and the Colosseum provided a stone quarry for medieval Christian churches, which were themselves often built on the foundation of pagan temples. Any wholehearted effort to restore the Forum would erase the footsteps of more recent momentous events, in the Middle Ages and the Renaissance. Therefore the typical pathway into the grand European past is the carefully preserved ruin; or the museum (often a defunct palace) crammed full of precious *objets d'art,* sculpture, and painting, which had been produced for a small aristocratic class.

Our American avenues to our past (our counterparts of ruins, museums, and monuments) are very different:

1. *We view the present as the climax of history.* The unidirectional character of American history—with no lost imperial grandeur in our past—makes us unwilling to abase ourselves before the greatness of any earlier epoch. The great men and the great works of our national history seem to us great precisely because they are still alive. In the national folklore, the Founding Fathers, who fought and compromised for the ideals of religious conscience, political liberty, equality, independence, constitutionalism, and federalism, are great precisely because their ideals live in America today. They cannot stir irredentist movements or nostalgia for a lost empire; in the South we see some glimmering of such hopes, but they are not important, and they are now dying a permanent death. The Federal Constitution is adored because it still works. We view our national history—and the facts justify us—as a single broad stream, the unbroken living current of an American Way of Life, not as a miscellaneous series of great epochs. Partly for this reason we lean

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more heavily on our past than on our political ideology as a resource for discovering our present, and for defining our ideals. And we have a simpler problem than has the Old World. Our past, unlike theirs, contains fewer contradictions; and we demand that it explain itself to us by giving meaning to our present.

2. *Our past has not built monuments for us.* The traveler to Europe or the Orient spends much of his time viewing pyramids, tombs, and palaces: obtruding landmarks in which long-dead men asserted their greatness. All these monuments betray some doubt that the future will remember and understand the past by merely incorporating its ways of life. They express a belief in perfected permanent *things* rather than in persisting, improving *ways*. But there has been no American Ozymandias!

3. *The democratic past of a mobile people uses up, improves, and replaces its artifacts.* The remains of past aristocratic cultures (even these which were not constructed on purpose to impress us) are often well preserved because they were so little used. The elegant libraries found all over Europe, with their copies of 16th- and 17th-century books in mint condition (sometimes with uncut pages), attest to aristocracy more than to literacy. Often books were well preserved simply because they were rarely read and then usually by men of genteel manners. But ours is a culture of newspapers and magazines, which only professors preserve. Often the most widely used books leave the barest trace. The hornbook—the ABC which was in the hand of every New England child—was used up, and perhaps not one remains from the 17th century. The New England Primer, the catechism in which children learned at the same time how to read and what to believe, was probably the commonest book in their houses in the 17th and 18th century; but from the early period we now possess few authentic examples. The inventories of the estates of 18th-century Virginians often list "pieces of books"—evidence not of their illiteracy but of their frequent use of books. The bibliophile, the curator of museums of fine arts, and the historian of the most impressive architectural monuments is often polishing the relics of a small aristocracy. But remnants of the widespread ways of life are gone with the wind.

IN CONTRAST to all this, the movement of Americans across the face of the continent led them to build only what would do until they could afford better. They hoped to move on and up to better things. Social mobility made most people in most parts of the country glad to tear down the old homestead in order to do better for their children, and to bury their humble ancestry. American technological progress in the 19th and 20th century made the very idea of an heirloom obsolete. Any business that handed its heirs a "museum piece" was preparing for bankruptcy. Few American parents dream of passing down their house as a family headquarters; instead they hope that each of their children will afford something up to date. In America, except among a precious few, the "antique" is hardly distinguished from the "second-hand."

The self-consciously monumental character of many of the most important European remains has invited their destruction as a patriotic or an ideological duty in later ages. Down with the Bastille! Men who make icons prepare for the iconoclasts of the future: they are unwittingly preparing the most interestingly disfigured museum pieces. Protestant reformers dutifully defaced monuments of the Roman Catholic Church, fanatical rationalists in the time of the French Revolution smashed the heads off the statues of Notre Dame. Later emperors seek to erase the greater monuments of their predecessors —or, preferably, to carve their own names on them instead. Every ideologue tries to burn the ideologues who have gone before. In nations with oscillating histories it becomes a patriotic duty to destroy the embarrassingly inconsistent past. Revolutions and reformations leave only the few relics which are too solid to be moved or too holy to be touched.

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But the American past is erased in a more casual and good-natured fashion. A house is removed to make way for a road; it is reconstructed to fit in the modern improvements: the two-car garage, the television room, or the air-conditioning. Except for the Indian destruction of early settlements, or the few wanton destructions by British troops during the American Revolution and the War of 1812 (which happened to include the White House), and such Civil War episodes as the burning of Atlanta and Sherman's march to the sea, the relics of the American past have been removed not to deny the past, but to fulfill and improve it. It is no wonder that Americans feel the need to manufacture historical monuments.

## THE NEED FOR CANDLES

### FLORENCE VICTOR

"Will *you* light candles when you're married?" One
Is not allowed to hesitate at all;
One *must* decide. At twelve one must compose
The candle-lighting schedule of one's life,
Or else be placed into the drawer marked "Hypocrite,"
To join the tarnished knife and spoon (both meat)
Bewitched by milkiness, awaiting trial
By fire, or left in solitude pending
Parole. The case is hopeless for the time.

Now we don't brood about hypocrisy;
Our friends may worship idols if they please.
The problem now is purely an aesthetic one,
Uncomfortably close to: "Does Madam
Wish candles when she dines?" or so we say
When we are being cruel. But still we know
That we have missed the point—we are not
Sociologists, and quickly think of
Other flames, and how we happened once to hide
Our head beneath the tablecloth. And yet
There is no doubt concerning *them*. We *will*
Light birthday candles till we're old, although
They have embarrassed us with all their pink-eyed,
Feeble heartiness much more than any
Sabbath candle has. And so we sit around
With all our well-read friends, and try to find
Why people must have candles in their lives.

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A NATIVE of Brooklyn, FLORENCE VICTOR is in her senior year at Queens College. This is her second poem in COMMENTARY—previously she appeared in school publications.

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# CLASH OF TWO IMMIGRANT GENERATIONS

## *Citizens and Exiles*

BOGDAN RADITSA

THE Hungarian revolt sent a new type of East European refugee to this country. At least several thousand young people among the 32,000 Hungarian refugees now over here were raised in a Communist society, and when they rebelled against it they did so with no thought of restoring pre-war Hungary. These post-Stalinist refugees are as different from the post-World War II newcomers as they are from the mass of immigrants who came here from Eastern Europe between 1890 and 1925.

Most of the new Hungarian refugees are not, however, of the post-Stalinist type. Our immigration laws, which keep out anyone who has ever belonged to a Communist organization, have condemned to Austrian and Yugoslav rather than American exile thousands of the more conscious and dynamic people whose postwar hopes led them into the Communist movement and whose profound disillusionment made them the leaders of the 1956 revolt. Had Imre Nagy, for example, been able to escape the Soviet secret police, President Eisenhower would have been able to offer him political asylum only under special and limited powers; a life-long Communist, Nagy could under no circumstances have been admitted as an immigrant under the McCarran-Walter Act. Many outstanding Hungarians have been compelled to remain in European camps as a result of such legal obstacles.

Hence the new Hungarian immigration to America is dominated by non-political people. Yet it does contain some authentic post-Stalinist refugees, mostly students. It will be interesting to see how they adjust to American life, and particularly to the two previous generations of immigrants with whom they will, unavoidably, live in closest contact.

The genuine emotion with which the new refugees were welcomed by the older immigrants from Hungary does not mean that the latter are a united group. On the contrary, they are split into two distinct generations, and the conflict between these is not only one of age: it is also a political, ideological, social, and economic split that rends almost every Hungarian American community.

Nor is the conflict confined to Americans of Hungarian origin: it is felt in almost the entire East European immigrant community of this country. That includes Poles, Czechs, Slovaks, Ukrainians, Balts, Croats, Serbs, Macedonians, Rumanians—all the peoples who were under the sway of the Austrian, Russian, or Turkish empires in the 19th century, fought their way to nationhood in the 20th, and fell in turn under Nazi and Communist rule during World War II.

My own experience over the last decade has been with immigrants from Croatia, Hungary's southern neighbor, a country whose political and cultural fate was linked with Hungary's for a thousand years. Some time ago, at the invitation of the Croatian Peasant Societies of the Pacific Coast, I made an extensive tour of California, Oregon, Washington, and British Columbia, in

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THE deep rift between the pre- and post-World War II immigrants from Eastern and Central Europe—one of the most important groups on the American ethnic scene—is here described by BOGDAN RADITSA, himself from Yugoslavia (he was born in Split, Dalmatia) and a former Washington press chief for the Tito regime who chose freedom. Mr. Raditsa is professor of Modern European history at Fairleigh Dickinson University; in the September 1951 COMMENTARY he contributed "Beyond Containment to Liberation."



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the course of which I spoke to hundreds upon hundreds of Americans of Croatian origin. It was then that I became aware at first hand of the bitterness that divides the Croatians who came here as displaced persons after 1945 from the Croatian American families established in this country for four and five decades. After returning to New York, I consulted friends who had come from other East European countries —Poles, Hungarians, Slovaks—and learned that the same pattern obtained in the immigrant communities they knew. That pattern tells much about how the American experience affects and has affected different groups of immigrants at different times.

CROATIANS began entering the United States in significant numbers toward the end of the last century. They came from Croatia proper, from the Dalmatian coast and the Adriatic islands, from Slavonia, Bosnia, and Herzegovina, and they all came as "Austrians" because they were born under the Dual Monarchy of the Hapsburgs. From New York they moved to the mining towns of Pennsylvania, then to Chicago, slowly through the West to the new mines in Colorado, and finally to California. This transcontinental migration was strictly economic in motivation; the Croats followed the railroads and new mines. When mining towns became ghost towns, they moved on. Many died on the way. But after the first reached California and wrote their countrymen back East or in Europe about the beauty and fertility of the land, the mild climate and the good fishing, the later Croat immigrants began going directly from New York to the Pacific.

Who were these pioneers? There were some priests and a handful of educated men, but the overwhelming majority were peasants and fishermen. They had left the old Austro-Hungarian Empire primarily because of poverty. The Hapsburg officialdom and the Magyar gentry under whom they were born held the Slavic Croats in contempt. For their part, the Croats had no taste for the monarchy or for the servile Catholic hierarchy that buttressed it, and still less for the big landowners and the rising middle class, which was as authoritarian in outlook as the landowners. The emigrating Croats all needed bread, but they also sought social equality and peace.

What the Croats of America accomplished in the past half-century is part of a larger American success story. With their fellow immigrants from Central, Eastern, and Southern Europe, they transformed the United States from an almost exclusively Anglo-Saxon country into a new type of nation—multiform, diverse, young, dynamic. At the same time they themselves were transformed. Talents and desires that had been frustrated on Austro-Hungarian soil achieved realization over here. Visiting these old immigrants today, one sees smart, modern homes with many rooms and several baths, all the latest American gadgets, new cars outside, and often swimming pools as well. If the immigrant grows fruit or grapes, he owns a few hundred acres of land and cultivates it with hired help. If he is a fisherman, he owns his own boat or boats and, in some cases, his own canneries. Unable to live by tilling Croatian soil or fishing in the Adriatic, he has made his traditional skills support him well on the rich Pacific Coast and in its fertile inland valleys.

THOUGH these Croats were primarily "economic" emigrants, they were not without political feelings and, like so many other immigrants, continued to be interested in the politics of their native country. Since they had been oppressed by Austrians and Magyars in their homelands, they dreamed of a union of South Slavs independent of either Austria or Hungary. Before and during World War I, political exiles from Croatia visited them and won their enthusiasm for the idea of the new state that was to be called Yugoslavia. Pacific Coast Croats largely financed the Yugoslav National Committee, the anti-Hapsburg exile organization that helped bring the new state into being. Legend has it that these Croats helped persuade Woodrow Wilson to back

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the Yugoslav idea, and that their votes supplied the narrow margin in California by which he was re-elected in 1916. Even today these Croatian Americans speak of Wilson with respect.

But the new Yugoslavia, far from becoming a federal democracy, turned into a narrow dictatorship dominated by the old Serbian ruling caste. The postwar travail of the Croats of Yugoslavia, which culminated in 1928 in the murder of their leader, Stephen Radich, right in the Belgrade Parliament, sadly disillusioned the American Croats. Most of the Croatian immigrants to these shores after 1918 were disappointed followers of Radich's Peasant movement, which sought Croat home rule. The postwar situation tended at the same time to divide Croatian Americans. Some sympathized with the ultra-nationalists who favored Croat secession from Yugoslavia; others believed in a federal reorganization of the Yugoslav state; the majority, however, simply became indifferent to politics in the old country.

Hitler's invasion of Yugoslavia in 1941 revived the American Croats' old sympathies. The great majority opposed the Nazi-controlled Independent Croat State led by the so-called Ustashi—not only because the Ustashi declared war on the United States after Pearl Harbor but also because they carried on a vicious campaign of extermination against Serbs and Jews. American Croats became discouraged, however, when the Yugoslav resistance to Hitler was totally identified with General Draja Mikhailovich and his Serbian Chetniks; before the war, these very Chetniks had had a large hand in the persecution of the Croats. At the same time, the royal Yugoslav government-in-exile smeared Croatia as a land of collaborators and intimated that the Serbs would rule postwar Yugoslavia in the same way as they had before. Through the influence of Yugoslav diplomats—most of them Pan-Serbian—on the State Department, hundreds of American Croats were classified as enemy aliens, and many were investigated by the FBI as potential German spies. Under such pressures, American Serbs and American Croats, who had lived as good neighbors for centuries in Europe and for decades in North America, turned against one another.

This situation dissolved, however, in 1943 when the Big Three officially endorsed Tito's National Liberation Movement, which promised a new federal Yugoslavia with autonomous republics for Serbia, Croatia, Slovenia, Montenegro, Bosnia-Herzegovina, and Macedonia. Tito himself was a Croat, and when Roosevelt and Churchill recognized him as an ally, American Croats felt relieved. They knew little about Tito the Communist, but they could not help but approve of Tito the Croat, who was fighting the Nazis harder than the Serb Mikhailovich. They also responded to Tito's repudiation of the Serbian royal house, his purge of the old Serb army and government hierarchy, and his appointment of local peasants and workers to the new government. When responsible Allied leaders hailed Tito as the George Washington of the Yugoslav revolution and his program as a Yugoslav "New Deal," not only North American Croats but Slovenes and many Serbs looked toward his regime with hope.

At the end of the war thousands of Canadian Croats, Serbs, and Slovenes sold their homes, packed up their Canadian-born children, and returned to their birthplaces to help build the new Yugoslav People's Republic. Not nearly as many United States Croats, Serbs, and Slovenes were able to do the same, since the State Department refused exit visas to those who were American citizens—thus preventing innumerable personal tragedies. For the majority of those who returned to Yugoslavia from the Western Hemisphere became disillusioned with Tito's new state, and, as soon as they could, sought Canadian passports and went back to the Pacific Coast.

In Vancouver, I spoke to several of these people, trying to understand why they had left Canada in the first place. One old man told me: "I somehow never felt quite at home in this country. Whenever I opened

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my mouth I felt people were looking down on me as a foreigner. I had work, I had a home, I had educated my children, but I was afraid of another depression, and I still felt like a foreigner. I thought that with the $30,000 I had from my savings and selling my house, I could live out my last days with my own people. I learned from bitter experience that not only my children but I myself could not adjust to the old country."

The children were particularly shocked. Though they spoke Croatian, they had been born and raised in a free country; they felt like foreigners in Yugoslavia. In the schools, they could not stomach the Communist indoctrination, which pictured the United States and Canada as countries where workers starved on slave wages. There must have been thousands of classroom arguments; finally, Communist officials told the Canadian children to stay away from school if they could not accept the official teaching.

Nor could the adults live comfortably. Their Canadian dollars had been quickly exchanged for Yugoslav currency at a highly inflated official rate. Their cars had been confiscated, with scant compensation, for the use of government officials. The jobs they received in industry, quite naturally, paid the same low wages that Yugoslav workers were getting.

When these families finally returned to Canada their stories did much to wipe out the remaining illusions about Tito among North American Croats. American and Canadian Croats now knew that Tito had liquidated not only the old reactionary elements, but also the progressive and democratic forces of the country.

THE Croatian and East European immigrant who began coming to North America after 1945 belonged in general to a different type from his predecessors. He was not a peasant or fisherman seeking economic opportunity, but a refugee from Communism with a political and intellectual background. Most of the exiles belonged to the Central European intelligentsia and were proud of it; at home before World War II, they had regarded emigrants to America as social failures. Doctors, lawyers, priests, military officers, bankers, businessmen, professors and teachers, the new arrivals were members of that middle class whose main claim to self-esteem was the leading part it had taken in the formation of the ethnic states set up in Eastern Europe and the Balkans after the collapse of the Austrian and Russian empires. To North America they brought, as their chief stock in trade, their opposition to Communism.

Their fathers and grandfathers had been liberals, but they were not. When the depression unleashed a Nazi-Communist duel for Eastern Europe, the intelligentsia became rapidly polarized between the totalitarian left and the totalitarian right. In Yugoslavia, as in Poland, Hungary, Czechoslovakia, and throughout the Balkans, one section of the educated middle class looked to Berlin and Rome for aid in achieving its political, economic, or ethnic aims, while another section looked to Moscow. The two camps waged hot and cold civil war against each other throughout Eastern Europe from 1933 to 1945, splintering the small forces of the democratic center in the process. The totalitarian left, for geographical reasons as well as those of historical circumstance, won the war, and stayed where it was to establish the postwar "people's democracies." The totalitarian right, having lost, emigrated.

There is of course a significant number of genuine and conscious democrats, even of liberals and socialists, among the postwar emigrés. Still others, while conservative in political orientation, did not and do not condone the atrocities of the Germans and their allies. The fact remains, nonetheless, that the majority of the postwar emigrés from Eastern Europe to the U. S., even when they profess devotion to democracy, retain a basically illiberal cast of mind. They themselves will tell you, even now, that "liberalism breeds Communism."

According to the Croatian variant of this myth, Hitler and Mussolini—or at least the Ustashi—were not war criminals but "pre-

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mature anti-Communists" who were betrayed by Churchill and Roosevelt. Citing every new anti-Roosevelt book that has appeared since 1945, these emigrés are convinced that "our country was sold down the river by the Roosevelt New Dealers." They bristle at the suggestion that the fratricidal war between the Croats and Serbs, in which they themselves played a part, did more to pave the way for Tito than any amount of Western "blunders."

These emigrés also felt ill at ease in a democratic environment of which the older immigrant was now a smooth-fitting part. At home, they had belonged to an elite close to the sources of political power and social prestige. All too soon the emigré discovered that the title of "doctor," the mark of distinction in the old country, carried no great weight here and was, in fact, generally identified with self-effacing physicians. "Doc" amused, rather than impressed, the old immigrants and their children. "There were plenty of doctors here before they started to come," a Los Angeles college girl of Croatian stock told me, "but we never heard the title stressed as much as these DP's do. They are too title-minded, and we don't like that."

With his deep sense of class and status, integration in American society is not easy for the emigré. The skilled engineer or physician who, after long years of internship, flunking license exams, washing dishes or lavatory floors, finally establishes himself in his profession, discovers that he does not enjoy the same exalted status that he would have had in the old country. I met several young Croatian doctors in the Los Angeles area who were earning $25,000 to $35,000 a year, but still felt declassed.

The situation is far more difficult for a lawyer, economist, or doctor of philosophy. And these form a large proportion of the postwar emigrés from Eastern Europe. Even when one of them manages to insure his economic welfare, the language barrier and the lack of contact with the American "ruling class" make him feel not only declassed but *dépaysé* as well, socially and ethnically uprooted. The collapse of his old ambition to become a leader of society poisons the otherwise satisfactory life he may have made for himself. Not only is he barred from political leadership in this country; he cannot become a labor leader either. Small wonder that he becomes bitter when he sees some of the older, originally peasant immigrants and their American-educated children making their way into politics and, to an even greater extent, into the labor movement.

THE polemics that rage from time to time in the foreign-language press reveal all the conflicts dividing the older immigrants and the new emigrés. On the one side, the older immigrant complains that the newcomers do not understand the basic principles on which this country is built. "We are all equals here," the older immigrants say. "We own the same homes and have the same opportunities. We love our country. We are devoted to our Constitution and to our government. We are not Communists, but we are not fascists either." Such are typical statements made by older immigrants in the Croatian-language press.

"These people who came after the war," old immigrants told me personally, "speak only of class and national hatred. If they are Croats, they hate the Serbs. If Serbs, they say all Croats should be exterminated. If they are Ukrainians, they hate all Russians. If they are Slovaks, they detest all Czechs. They are all the same, there is no difference between them. They hate us, too, since we do not hate anybody. Not only do we Croats feel different from these DP's; the Serbs, Ukrainians, Slovaks—all the older immigrants have the same feeling toward their own DP's."

"They all tell us," another man said, "how many Communists they killed during the war. If they are Croat Ustashi, they say they killed Serbs because the Serbs were Communists. If they are Serb Chetniks, they say they killed Croats because the Croats were Communists. Hitler, Mussolini, and the rest, they tell us, were fighting Communism, and if America had followed their

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example, the world would be in better shape today."

Despite their disclaimers of fascism, the emigrés generally tend to be race-conscious and often anti-Semitic, whereas anti-Semitism is virtually unknown among the older immigrants. I met one sincere young emigré who tried to persuade me that all economic and social power in this country was held by Jews, and that unless the same "precautions" were taken here as in pre-war Germany and Italy, Communism would win out in the United States. Though I pointed out, as calmly and factually as I could, the preponderance of Protestants in the administration of American industry and finance, he continued to talk on in an obsessed way, unwilling even to listen.

It is not surprising that most emigrés of this type became avid McCarthyites. Their hopes were highest when the power of the Wisconsin Senator seemed most formidable, for they expected McCarthy to bring America closer to the pre-war European order under which they had thrived. The way in which constitutional processes gradually reduced the Senator to his true proportions disappointed them deeply, and to this day they canot understand how a general in the White House could help "disarm" McCarthy in the "fight against Communism."

The intellectuals among these emigrés have never read Tocqueville and don't care to. Their intellectual texts are abridged editions of Charles Maurras. The Roman Catholics among them oppose Jacques Maritain and hate the liberal Catholic *Commonweal* as much as they do any secular liberal magazine.

Most expressions of this kind of prejudice fall on deaf ears as far as the old generation is concerned. The older immigrants are devout worshippers of Roosevelt, even when they now like Ike. Many of them saw hard-earned savings wiped out in the depression, and they attribute their present high living standard directly to the economic and social reforms of the New Deal. In this, of course, the old immigrants reflect the prevailing American experience.

And in their attitude to questions of foreign policy, too, the older immigrants reflect the America in which they have spent most of their years. For while the new emigrés demand a bellicose and aggressive policy toward Communism and ridicule the West for its "weakness," the older immigrants would prefer to see America avoid foreign entanglements; any policy aiming to avert war seems wise to them. And, for the most part, the older Croatian immigrants do not resent the assistance the United States gives to Tito. In fact, they feel a bit proud when Yugoslavia is described in the newspapers as the pivot of southeastern Europe, and admire (as do many other Americans) the portrait of Tito as a self-made man which is drawn in *Life* and other mass media.

IT WOULD be misleading to suggest that the emigrés who arrived in this country eight, ten, and twelve years ago have not changed at all since then. Material security has had its effect, as has their freedom to dissent openly from the prevailing liberal atmosphere and still go on living and working with no fear of reprisal. In five years one can become an American citizen with a television set, a car, perhaps a home of his own, certainly plenty of food and clothing. The older immigrant took twenty years to achieve this kind of living standard.

Gradually, the idea of a triumphant return to the old country is fading. Most emigrés realize that the old order suffered a mortal blow with the war; the events in Poland and Hungary have since made it plain to all that the end of Communism, no matter how it comes about, will not bring back pre-1939 conditions. Only a tiny minority still want to return—mainly old professional politicians and diplomats who have not entered the mainstream of American life but remain active in the various exile committees and propaganda agencies in New York and Washington. Most of the DP's now settled throughout the land have long ago abandoned hopes of returning. But this does not mean that they do not still feel

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separated and alienated from the America around them, and do not continue to huddle insecurely in their segregated little communities.

These communities generally center around a church or ethnic organization, often directly transplanted from the old country. The social attitudes by which these communities are inspired are quite different from their native American or older immigrant equivalents. It has been, quite naturally, the more liberal and venturesome spirits among the emigrés who find it easiest to leave these enclaves and plunge into the American world at large. As a result, the reactionaries have with the years become even more dominant in the emigré communities. And as the more moderate DP's move out among their fellow Americans, the hard-core emigrés who are unable or unwilling to do so become even more bitter and fanatical.

There is a very real danger in this process. For these emigré enclaves—whether church, ethnic, or fraternal organizations—are largely responsible for sponsoring and harboring the newest arrivals from Eastern Europe. The latter may not share their prejudices at first, but are liable to absorb them with sufficient exposure. On the West Coast I spoke with many young men in their teens or twenties who had escaped fairly recently from Yugoslavia. They had been non-political youngsters originally, who came West in search of freedom and opportunity much as the older immigrants had. Yet they felt obliged now to parrot fascist slogans in which they only half believed in order to please their elders. At the same time, many of the children of the early postwar emigrés told me they felt torn between the beliefs of their parents and those of their American schoolmates and teachers.

Many of the new Hungarian refugees have already been consigned to the care of these die-hard emigré groups—a bitter irony when one recalls the democratic aspirations of the Hungarian revolution that brought them here. New Yorkers last November witnessed a scene which symbolized both the irony and the problem: when Anna Kethly, the old Hungarian Social Democrat, rose to address a Madison Square Garden rally for the freedom fighters, she was coarsely booed by organized right-wing and fascist emigrés, and the chairman had to plead for her right to speak. Yet the refugees of the revolution in which she and her ideals played so large a part may have to turn to these very same emigrés for aid in settling here.

New restlessness in Eastern Europe remains a distinct possibility. If East Germans, attracted in part by the example of democratic West Berlin, flee and are admitted into the U.S., will they be turned over to those organized Sudeten Germans already in this country who once played such a large part in Hitler's march to war? The examples can be multiplied for other areas of Central and Eastern Europe. The danger is that the present open-door policy will not help revitalize the country with an infusion of blood from live and alert immigrants filled with respect and affection for our democratic framework, but will, instead, spread the old poisons of Europe among the American community at large.

The answer is not to close our doors; it is to open them still wider. America's responsibility for these new arrivals should not end in New York harbor. Surely their education and their Americanization should not be left to chance. Our country has been generous in giving a handful of East European leaders the opportunity to enjoy a life of repose and freedom from economic worry. We have been, perhaps, too generous in nurturing, with the aid of these old politicians, hopes in East Europe itself which we have never intended to support with concrete deeds. Far greater generosity, and energy, is required for the new task at hand.

Our government, our religious organizations, universities, and burgeoning foundations must lead the way. There is a vast educational effort required—far greater than the emergency program for the tiny groups of Hungarian college students who landed here. Not only young men who may ar-

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rive in 1957 and 1958, but old emigrés who arrived in 1955, and even in 1945, should be brought into direct and sustained contact with American organizations and institutions. More concretely: lawyers' associations should map out programs to retrain, absorb, and integrate emigré lawyers. Teachers, scholars and journalists certainly have much to gain from helping their emigré counterparts understand and contribute to, American life. The national shortage of engineers and technicians makes it virtually mandatory that we bring semi-trained emigré technicians out of isolation and into the factory and the factory-training programs. Emigré labor leaders, regardless of their past politics, must be exposed to the workings of American trade-unionism and given a part to play in it. Even the emigré politician may be helped, for if he is young enough and not an unregenerate totalitarian, he may find more genuine scope for his talents in the local affairs of a small American community than he has so far found lobbying in Washington and writing angry letters to the New York *Times*.

Much as we like to console ourselves with our immigrant traditions, the pattern of immigration has changed. The postwar emigré *is* different, and the post-Stalinist refugee is a completely new quantity. Neither is quite in harmony with American democracy. If anyone doubts that, just let him ask the older East European immigrants who have been helping build America over the last half-century and more.

## RUTH

### NEIL WEISS

REMEMBER me? I stand alone
in the unripe corn and see
the twisting sheath
wrap tight around the shuck,
squeezing it, squeezing it
until I tear it open and suck
the silken under-mat.

My tears are barren on this earth.
As I clung to Naomi
and felt her withering flesh,
my husband dead, earth in earth,
I come not to glean, but to
kiss this corn, and wait
for Boaz to burn my womb to fruit.

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NEIL WEISS's verse has appeared before in our pages, and in other periodicals, and his book of poems, *Changes of Garments*, was issued by Indiana University Press in 1956. He has just finished a 2,000-line poem about New York, his native city.

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# WESTERN ILLUSIONS ABOUT THE MIDDLE EAST

## *Stability as Far Off as Ever*

**ELIE KEDOURIE**

EVER since the 19th century, when so-called reforms were introduced in the Ottoman Empire, Western observers have watched Middle Eastern politics with hopeful expectancy. Yet the Middle East has seen no quiet and found few solutions over the last hundred years. Violent and arbitrary rulers have steadily succeeded one another in attempting drastic remedies, but all to no avail. The troubles of the Middle East are, obviously, not passing ones, and would seem symptoms of a deep social and intellectual crisis such as the schemes of reformers and the good will of philanthropists could hardly alleviate. Nevertheless, the idea that Middle Eastern instability is endemic has found little favor either in England or America. Every new revolution in this area is still greeted as the herald of a new day, and every new outbreak of trouble as the necessary and beneficent prelude to an epoch of orderliness and justice.

The meliorism of Western liberals, the activist categories and hopeful concepts of their political science, go far to explain this attitude, as does also their conviction that a stable, universal peace can be established only when the whole world is composed of democratic and progressive nation-states. Whatever the worth of this notion, it is not one that a statesman should act on. To him, it should not matter whether the events he has to cope with are milestones on a road leading somewhere, or mere variations on an eternally repeated theme.

English and American policies in the Middle East, together with the doctrines and principles which justify them, are an example of the large part that mere verbalism and dubious dogma can play in the forming of doctrines and the shaping of policies. That the Middle East is remote, with traditions and codes of behavior that are alien, should not by itself have led to misunderstanding of its problems; the unfamiliar may invite caution as well as recklessness. Nevertheless, the remoteness of the Middle East has made it difficult, and in many cases impracticable, to judge in the light of common sense and experience certain interpretations of Middle Eastern history and politics offered to the Americans and the British by interpreters who seemed expert and well placed.

Among the most influential of such interpreters in America are missionaries. Their case is curious: they went out to proselytize and have stayed to sympathize.* To America they began, some fifty years ago, to present a picture of Islam as a strictly unitarian, democratic, and egalitarian version of Protestantism. The task before Christians, they said, was not to make converts from Islam to Christianity, but rather to lean over Middle Eastern society with compassion, to take it by the hand and lift it up out of centuries of superstition, corruption, and oppression. Essentially and basically, Islam was enlightened and progressive. The Western education which they, the missionaries, provided would serve to make Moslems aware of the true values of their religion and to inculcate

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AMERICAN and British writers on the Middle East have traditionally assigned its troubles to causes which can be removed by economic progress, greater political liberty, and the satisfaction of national claims. These views are here critically analyzed by ELIE KEDOURIE, author of *England and the Middle East* (1956) and a historian who teaches at the London School of Economics.

*See "Islam and Arab Nationalism" by Joel Carmichael in the July 1957 issue of COMMENTARY.



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in them a sense of brotherhood toward the Christians, who, after all, worshipped, albeit in their own manner, the same true God as the Moslems. And in fact, this was what Western education was already bringing about in the Middle East. Enlightenment was spreading, rulers were acquiring a public conscience, and democracy was becoming stronger every day.

Events to the contrary notwithstanding, missionaries are still saying all these things. "The time seems ripe," writes the Reverend Erich W. Bethmann, "to usher in the era of cooperation—a cooperation based on mutual respect for and esteem of the deep spiritual qualities inherent in both religions. These qualities are a part of every believing Moslem and every believing Christian, finding in each their deepest realization in prayer, love and mercy; and 'where prayer, love and mercy dwell, there God is dwelling too.' "

Such interpretations of the Middle East are difficult to shake, and not only because their sponsors are authoritative and well placed; there are at least two other factors that permit them to go unchallenged.

The first, as has been said, is the Middle East's remoteness. One of the simplest and most effective means of keeping in touch with reality is to compare what people say with what they do. In one's own society, where one has a relatively clear conception of one's own position and interests, and is familiar with the meaning of the words used and with the implications of behavior, this test seldom fails. But it is not so easy to apply it outside one's own society.

A country like America is, even at best, unlikely to have a clear and settled conception of what her own interests are in every place in the world where events have now compelled her to have a policy. Alien conventions and unfamiliar language add particularly to her uncertainty on this score. Reports are ambiguous or faulty; actions dissolve in a haze; causes and consequences alike appear shadowy and insubstantial; those in power in remote places seem to be defined more by current legend and doctrine than by the fact that they are men of flesh and blood who take bribes and make conspiracies, who deport, imprison, and kill. Assumptions about such men tend to remain abstract and untested by experience; rulers and politicians are taken up and praised for what they say rather than for what they do.

This tendency is reinforced by a second powerful factor. When the language of modern English and American politics, which has now been adopted by the whole world, is divorced from the tradition in which it has value and dignity, it becomes a debased, inflated jargon, a showman's patter by which tyranny is made to seem constitutional, and crookedness to look straight. The seeming familiarity of this language serves more than any exotic remoteness to confuse and entrap the mind. All explanations become smooth, all theories plausible. "Therefore," we read of our condition in Holy Scripture, "is the name of it called Babel because the Lord did there confound the language of all the earth."

THE arguments of the American missionaries have their equivalent in Britain. The English version of Islam is not identical with that of the missionaries, but tends to the same conclusions. Orientalists and commentators on Oriental affairs have succeeded by now in spreading a deep sense of guilt among the English intellectual and political classes. The West, they have argued, has sinned grievously—out of ignorance and also out of presumption and cupidity. Contemptuous of Eastern values, it has taken advantage of Eastern weakness to impose its domination. In its pure, untroubled state, Islam is more wholesome than Western civilization. It forbids drunkenness, prohibits usury, and makes class warfare very difficult. And what has the West, what has England, done? It has let vice loose in the East, it has made cupidity attractive, it has shattered the harmony of society.

There is enough truth in all this to make it seem plausible, but the passion and the tenacity with which these conceptions are advanced speak for neither the judgment nor the discretion of their authors. They

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have not been content merely to expound a theory of the nature and history of Islam. They have condemned, rebuked, and recommended. They have said that the acts of France and England after the First World War twisted and distorted the political development of the Arab countries. It is asserted that there were at that time upright, moderate Arab nationalists who were prepared to cooperate with the West and to follow modern, enlightened, and progressive policies. They were thwarted and betrayed, therefore driven to violence and extremism. England conspired with France and the Zionists to deny the Arabs their just claims and to bring ruin on them. The least that the West can now do is make amends, and repair the moral and material damage it has done. Henceforth it must promote and guarantee Arab unity, support Arab nationalism, and provide ample, unconditional economic aid to the Arab countries.

All this, of course, is by now a familiar argument of Arab propaganda itself, but it was formulated and perfected originally by English writers and scholars. They were encouraged in their attitude by two circumstances. The first lay in historiography itself—in the way that Anglo-American historians were dealing with recent political events. Some of the most influential versions of the origins and consequences of the First World War were based on the assumption, or rather the conviction, that it was all due to powerful and sinister interests which tried to advance their aims through secret diplomacy. Had diplomacy been open, it was argued, many disastrous consequences of the peace would have been averted, and governments would not have dared to avow, even to themselves, much less try to pursue, their illicit and dangerous ambitions. The Allies had arrived at their settlement of the Eastern question by means of secret agreements, and this of itself was enough to compromise that settlement, which paid no particular heed to pan-Arab ambitions, and to make it immoral, dishonorable, and worthless.

The other circumstance which has contributed greatly to the current British picture of recent Middle Eastern history is an accidental one, but its consequences have nonetheless been prodigious. The accident was the involvement of T. E. Lawrence and his friends in Middle Eastern affairs. Lawrence started as an outsider, but rose to fame and power in a few short years. He lacked both the *esprit de corps* and the understanding of his country's position and interests which could be obtained solely from regular practice in governmental and diplomatic negotiation. His apologia for the Arabs was violently eccentric, and out of all relation to the facts. This, in itself, is not surprising. What is surprising, and disheartening, is that British statesmen and politicians who were neither outsiders nor eccentrics should have embraced a version of history so inimical to their country's interests and so contemptuous of such traditional instruments of rule as her army and civil and foreign services.

The burden of Lawrence's complaint, and the refrain of his supporters, was that a great act of injustice had been done to the Arabs by reactionary politicians and their ridiculous civil servants. These men, ignorant of the new forces in the East, had shown criminal weakness in the face of the diabolical designs of France. Lawrence and his friends spoke with an air of authority, not as mere students of politics. They had been there, in the new Middle East, they were acquainted with the new Arab leaders, and they recommended them wholeheartedly to the British public. Again, what is surprising is not so much Lawrence's own extravagance as that of his friends, men of birth and breeding, in taking up and sponsoring upstart, tediously fanatical conspirators altogether lacking in political sense and style.

THE result of the activities of the missionaries in America, and of the Orientalists and Oriental experts in England, has been to establish that the two most important political issues in the Middle East are

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"Zionism and imperialism." It is asserted that these are at the root of instability in the area. If one could somehow manage to remove them, or to convince the Arabs that they had been removed or at least neutralized, then there would be a real prospect of peace and prosperity. But is either "imperialism" or "Zionism" really capable of being settled as an "issue"? And, even if they were settled, would peace and progress follow automatically in the Middle East?

The *immediate* issue in the Middle East today may be the conflict between Israel and the Arab states, but the *necessary* and larger issue is the rivalry and dissension among the Arab states themselves. It is this rivalry—not Israel—that led to the formation of the Arab League, which has now become the main theater of the struggle for ascendancy among the Arab states. Palestine was from the first, and remains, the most important instrument and pretext for this struggle, just as the Palestinian Arabs, together with the Jewries of the Middle East, have become its main victims. But even if the Palestine problem were "solved," even if all the Israelis were exterminated, the Middle East would still be without peace; there would follow a great quarrel over the spoils, and issues even more intractable than the present ones would soon emerge.

Imperialism, as an issue of practical politics in the Middle East, is even more fundamentally irrelevant than Zionism. What can it mean to say that imperialism has to be eliminated before peace can be assured in the Middle East? Today all it can mean is that what British and French influence is left in the Middle East has to be liquidated. But this obviously would not entail the liquidation of the influence of the other great powers. On the contrary. And to replace English and French with American and Russian influence and rivalries would not necessarily secure greater prosperity or a firmer peace. If, however, what is meant is that peace cannot come to the Middle East until all great powers are deprived of their influence there, then the "anti-imperialists" are talking nonsense. Aside from the fact that Western sentimentality alone permits one to consider great powers nasty and small ones virtuous by definition, great powers acquire and hold influence in the Middle East by *necessity* today, and for obvious reasons. A Middle East from which the influence of the great powers were entirely absent is utterly unthinkable in the foreseeable future. Thus the contention that peace in the area depends upon the elimination of imperialism has turned out to be an empty slogan which further confuses and debases the language of political discourse.

Of course, the liquidation of English and French power and influence in the Middle East might work to the benefit of the United States, and all the jargon about imperialism, it may be argued, is designed to lay down a smoke screen behind which the United States can better pursue her particular interests. If so, must the elimination of British and French influence remain a permanent aim of American policy in the Middle East, and will it really help to establish the influence of the United States in the area? The fact is that the exclusion of Britain and France will strengthen Russian as much as it will American influence in the area.

We already know how such situations work out. Russia's absence from the Middle East after 1917 left England and France facing each other alone there, so that the traditionally triangular or quadrilateral game played with the Eastern Question, as it had been perfected in the 19th century, could no longer go on. The hostility to France that colored so much of the English political attitude between the wars made it seem safe, reasonable, and attractive to edge her out of the Levant, so that England would remain the sole dominant power there. As it turned out, this led to the undoing not only of the French position, but of the English position too. The very same arguments that were used, with British encouragement and applause, against the French were later turned against England.

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History, it is true, neither teaches lessons nor repeats itself, and where England failed the United States may still succeed. However, if America and Russia are left alone as the only great powers in the Middle East, they will both be forced into the same posture. They will be compelled to try to outbid one another. And with Russia alone as competitor, it does not seem that it will be easier or more fruitful for the United States to ride the anti-imperialist wave than it was for her to do so with Britain as a competitor. It may well be more difficult. England tried to ride that wave and promoted the Arab League; and like the old man of the sea, the extravagant rhetoric and inflated ambitions conjured up on that occasion now hang on to cramp and cripple all attempts on Britain's part to follow a saner policy. Not only is anti-imperialism in the Middle East either irrelevant or nonsensical as an issue of practical politics. It also tends to increase misunderstanding, promote illusions, and befog issues, all of which works to the benefit of irresponsible agitators and those who know how, and do not scruple, to use such agitators. In that kind of game, the peaceable and civilized forces always lose.

TIDY doctrines, then, will not help, and simple answers will deceive. Middle Eastern disorder is deep and endemic, and the disappearance neither of Israel nor of "imperialism" would cure or even mitigate it. The effort to modernize Middle Eastern society, to make it Western or "democratic," must itself inevitably bring about evils, some of which may turn out to be greater than the benefits.

It is said that the prosperity brought to certain Middle Eastern countries by oil, by Western aid, and by increased economic activity will in the end produce that middle class hitherto notoriously absent from Moslem history, and that this class will prove a bulwark of constitutionality and freedom. This hope is based presumably on an analogy with European and American development—but one that happens to be quite false. The middle classes in Europe and America climbed to power by their own efforts, without the help of the state, and sometimes against it. And whereas economic enterprise was in the West predominantly the affair of individuals, in the Middle East it is predominantly the affair of governments.

The British government neither opened up the coal mines of the British Isles nor claimed a share of their profits from the mine owners; similarly, the government of the United States did not demand that every Texan who found oil in his back yard give up half the value of his property to the state. It may be argued that this freedom from government interference has caused great inequalities, and that the benefits of the new wealth were distributed in proportion neither to merit nor to need. This may well be, but such a consequence is inseparable from the libertarianism, the independence, and the mistrust of authority traditionally associated with the middle classes in the West, and which, it is now hoped, may somehow be transplanted to the Middle East. But in that area government is the chief entrepreneur; it receives the oil royalties and the foreign aid, and it is through its decisions and its favors that prosperity filters down to the mass of the people.

In Europe the middle classes attained political power after becoming economically dominant. It looks as though modern economic processes will lead to no such result in the Middle East, since there they only confirm and accentuate what has always been a characteristic of Moslem society, namely the dependence of all ranks and classes on a central political authority. Now, as in the past, wealth depends on access to political power, on the benevolence, or at least acquiescence, of those in power. In an area where political power is traditionally capricious in its transmission, and tends to be acquired by violence and established by repression, it is the caprice of those in power, rather than the impersonality of the economic process, that gives so-

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ciety its predominant character and its characteristic visage.

What must also tend to confirm the Middle East in its condition is that its new, "modern" wealth does not come at all from local enterprise, but descends like a sudden windfall, as the tribute which a miraculous providence has compelled Europe and America to press upon the East.

THE European administrative techniques that have been put at the disposal of the governments of the Middle East have enabled these to exert a more minute and systematic control over social and economic life than before. New methods of import licensing, exchange control, and fiscal supervision have made private enterprise more dependent than ever on the good will of those in authority. The latter are now able, when they choose, to punish the objects of their ill will with a new swiftness and effectiveness. It was thanks to modernized administrative methods that the Iraqi government was able to despoil the Jews of that country so efficiently, and that the government of Egypt was able to follow in Iraq's footsteps so easily. Insofar as this new power of government makes the dependence of economic life on political power more complete it must hinder the emergence of that independent middle class on which so much hope is set.

Nor does the increase in the power of government affect the economic sphere alone; it reaches in all directions. What modernization of society there has been in the Middle East is not the result of private initiative and of the gradual adaptation of local traditions. It has been imposed from above, by decree, and carried out as far as possible by officials. This has meant that the traditional articulations of Middle Eastern society must either bend to the will of the reformer or be completely sundered. Thus Moslem as well as non-Moslem religious and communal organizations, with all their local particularities and vested interests, have been greatly weakened of late. Individuals are made equal under the law and corporations are made creatures of statute, but law and statute themselves express the irresistible will of a central and sovereign authority. The Westernization of Middle Eastern society has, so far, only made it more helpless in the face of the state. Thus Westernization has given new life to political attitudes immemorially prevalent in Moslem society, confirming the subject in his passive obedience to his ruler, and the ruler in the amplitude, if not legality, of his power. Political stability in such a situation remains, of necessity, precarious. Traditional checks and balances have grown progressively weaker, and the subject has more reason than ever to fear his masters. On the other hand, to obtain power, it is sufficient to get hold of the conveniently centralized mechanism of control, and the rewards of power have become larger than ever.

As a result, political instability in the Middle East has been increased. And the character of the men who now compete for power increases it still further. These are indeed new men, whose earliest and deepest political impulse is contempt for the ways of their fathers. Youth, which in most countries and ages has disqualified one for rulership, has become since the days of the Young Turks an advantage. The dislocation of society is made more acute by estrangement between the generations. Those who possess the European techniques which Middle Eastern society must adopt if it is not to perish, are the young. Therefore they feel not only that they know better than their fathers, but that they have the key to salvation. Their recklessness and passion, their conviction of their fathers' ignorance and folly, their inexperience and clumsiness in the exercise of power, combine to deprive them of that decorum and *gravitas* which impressed foreign observers in the Moslem ruling classes of the past, and which served to restrain the latter in their greed and cruelty. Heaven knows that sedition, treason, and civil war were common enough in the Middle East in the past, but only now has revolution become

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glorified as a *necessary* part of the political process, violence been proclaimed beneficent, and treason holy.

The institutions, and the men who concontrol the institutions, thus conspire to make Middle Eastern politics the sport of civil commotion. It has been so ever since the Young Turks came to power, and there is no sign of any change for the better. This situation alone makes it prudent to continue to expect trouble in the Middle East, and not put too much faith in simple solutions and neat explanations.

But there are still other factors that should make us cautious—factors which have to do directly with foreign policy. The Moslem doctrine of international relations recognizes only two possible situations: either war on the obdurate infidel, or the latter's submission to the authority of the faithful. Peace with the infidel *de jure* is impossible; until he recognizes the authority of a Moslem ruler there can only be various grades of active or passive hostility. Such has been not only theory but practice in the relations of Moslem and Christian powers. The chronically unsettled state of the frontiers between Israel and her neighbors is nothing exceptional; unrest and violence have normally been the case on the frontiers between Christendom and Islam. The notions of international law and practice current for centuries in the West, notions like the concert of powers, the comity of nations, the sanctity of treaties, rules of natural justice, decent respect for the opinion of mankind—all these are quite alien and largely unintelligible concepts to the Middle East.

It is significant that the Ottoman Empire was formally made a member of the concert of Europe only after the Crimean War, when it had lost its strength and was being taken in tow by the Christian powers. It is not surprising, then, that to Moslem minds the Western vocabulary of international relations should appear to have little relevance to what is their most important preoccupation: the steady encroachment by Christian powers on the domain of Islam. Moslems see the same lack of relevance to their own concern in the two major products of the Western theory of international relations, the League of Nations and the United Nations. When these institutions were set up, the Christian powers seemed to the Moslems to have become more powerful and dominating than ever, and all the more a threat to Islam. The Moslem states think of themselves not as mere quiescent members of the comity of nations, but as fighters engaged in an active struggle against the very powers that claim to set the tone and establish the criteria in international relations. Their adherence to Western principles of international relations is as formal and empty as was Turkey's admittance to the Concert of Europe in 1856.

These traditional Moslem attitudes have only been confirmed and fortified by nationalist doctrine, which has been the most popular and the best understood of all Western political ideas in the Middle East. The theory of nationalism is as little disposed as Moslem doctrine to envisage a stable international order as a practical possibility. Moslem thinking postpones this to the day when the last infidel shall have made his obeisance to the Caliph; nationalist doctrine postpones it to the day when all national claims shall have been satisfied. Both are subversive of international stability, both are activist, both consider conflict not a regrettable evil, or even the continuation of diplomacy by other means, but, so long as a single imperfection subsists in the world, or so long as a single principle remains unrealized, a duty the carrying out of which is exhilarating and rewarding.

Against this attitude no simple strategy avails. Resource, cunning, patience, and steadfastness can hardly cope with it. And even these will fail if it is thought that they can do more than keep disorder at bay.

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# ISRAEL'S ARAB MINORITY

## *Safeguarding Their Rights*

WALTER SCHWARZ

LIKE a becalmed ship, Israel's foreign policy stands ominously still. About the dramatic events in and around Syria she can do nothing. Against the renewed supply of U.S. arms to Jordan she could make only a routine protest at the United Nations. And solving the long deadlock over the Arab refugees is something she firmly regards as outside her power: the initiative is supposed to be with the other side.

But becalmed sailors are not necessarily idle. The Arab-Israel problem has its domestic aspect in the status of the Arab minority in Israel, and there have been a number of signs in recent months that the authorities are making fresh efforts to improve relations with this hapless minority. The attempt is timely, for the problem of the 200,000 Arabs who have remained in Israel is not really separable from that of the 900,000 who fled and have since become the biggest single stumbling block in the way of peace.

Those who fled in 1948-49 left behind cousins, brothers, aunts, and even husbands, wives, and children. A few still meet at night along remote stretches of the border. Others keep a place for absent relatives in their homes and fields. All are daily consumers of the hate propaganda emanating from Cairo, which blares from café loudspeakers on both sides of the frontier. If physical contact between the two sundered portions of the community is necessarily slight, the emotional and intellectual bonds remain close.

Resettling the refugees in Jordan and elsewhere is only half the solution; it would have little effect unless at the same time it made loyal citizens of the Israeli Arabs. In the long run a discontented Arab minority can be as politically disruptive an element in Israel as the refugees in their squalid camps are beginning to be in Jordan. In fact, Communist loudspeaker vans are already touring the streets of Nazareth—an Arab as well as a Christian city, and a focus of political unrest in Israel.

The Israel government's new attitude may also have something to do with Israel's tenth anniversary celebration to be held next spring. The occasion will invite a good deal of appraisal and stock-taking all over the world. One not irrelevant subject for study will be the question: How have the Jews, who might be expected to be the world's leading experts on minorities, treated Israel's own minority of non-Jewish citizens?

The first sign of a new approach was an announcement from the Prime Minister's office last July, at the conclusion of a meeting between Mr. Ben Gurion and the seven Arab members of the Knesset. The announcement listed the following concessions to Arab demands:

Abolition of travel permits for Arab residents in Galilee who have occasion to go to Nazareth, Afula, or Acre—all in the northern area.

Easing the night curfew in the "triangle" area (on the Jordan border, northeast of Tel Aviv).

Granting of long-term agricultural loans.

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ISRAEL's population of two million includes 200,000 Arabs who are represented in parliament by deputies of their own choice, and in general have the status of a national minority with rights equal to those of other citizens. The practical restrictions imposed by the continued state of undeclared war with Israel's Arab neighbors are here discussed by an observer who suggests ways of improving the situation. WALTER SCHWARZ, who was educated in Britain, has spent some time in Israel as an independent journalist.



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Provision of drinking water for Arab villages.

Aid in laying roads to Arab villages.

Expansion of agricultural and technical education.

Aid to Arab farmers engaged in tobacco growing and marketing.

Advisory committees on income tax matters.

These miscellaneous measures sketch out a panorama of the problem. The picture is filled out by more recent news from the Ministry of Agriculture, which has appointed a gifted young Iraqi, David Zacharia, as head of its Arab development section. Some 2,000 Arab landowners—mostly peasants—have now been compensated for land taken over during or after the war of 1948-49. Ten agricultural schools out of Israel's twenty-two have made arrangements for taking Arab students—in order to counter (as an official put it when the announcement was made) "a growing feeling of frustration among educated Arabs who cannot find suitable jobs in Israel." Of the 125,000 acres of agricultural land owned by Israeli Arabs (excluding the Bedouins in the southern desert who own a further 125,000) the area under irrigation has been increased from 625 acres in 1948 to 8,750 acres.

What does all this amount to? Under the new rules an Arab living in Nazareth can travel 12 miles to Afula, or 25 miles to Acre, without a special pass. An Arab living in the "triangle" area may stay out of doors an extra two hours in the evening (until 11 P.M.), and rise an hour earlier (at 3 A.M.). These and other concessions were greeted by well-meaning people with a great sigh of relief. Yet they are a reminder that ten years after these Arabs were issued identity cards as citizens of the state, the great majority of them—those resident in Galilee, the Negev, and the "Triangle"—are still under military rule. If they can now travel to Acre without a pass, they cannot go to nearby Haifa, or to Tel Aviv, or anywhere outside their military area, without queuing for a permit which is always granted for a specific day (unless it is a permanent work pass), and for travel by a strictly defined route.

Again, the settlement of 2,000 land claims is an achievement that must be seen in the context of some 30,000 Arab citizens of Israel who were displaced in 1948-49 in the same way as the refugees who left the country altogether. Most of them fled from their villages, terrified by rumors—both true and false—about what was happening to Arabs; some were moved by the authorities. The predicament of these 30,000 was, and in some ways still is, similar to that of the 900,000 refugees—except that they happen to be still in Israel. So far, only 3,500 applications for compensation have been received by the Development Authority which administers their lands. This may well be due to the fact that the compensation offered to former owners is based on the land values of 1950, at a rate of about $155 per acre, whereas today's taxable values are often three times as high. Social progress, too, appears less substantial when compared to the wholesale transformation of the country's general agricultural scene: no Jewish settlement is without running water, while of 102 Arab villages, only 20 are supplied with it.

A BALANCED assessment of the Arab situation in Israel is extraordinarily difficult. In general one encounters two basic attitudes, both legitimate, yet conflicting. According to one, the Arabs are a potential fifth column in a beleaguered country who need watching. While a normally placed government can go out of its way to be tolerant to minorities, even potentially hostile ones, Israel cannot forget that Jordanian armor is poised within striking distance of the frontier. Moreover, cases of Israeli Arabs aiding and abetting infiltrators, including the murderous *fedayeen*, have been numerous, and there are occasional instances of sabotage and espionage. Nor can a nation on the defensive overlook the possibility of large-scale uprisings in the event of invasion. To the proponents of this viewpoint, the Arab citizen is surprisingly well off. Although he has, on an average, one acre

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less of land than in British Mandatory times, his standard of living (if he is not unfortunate enough to be an "internal refugee") is much higher than in those days, and certainly higher than anywhere across the border. There are permanent boom conditions in agriculture, and Western-type wage scales are the rule. Compulsory education takes care of four-fifths of the Arabs (the missing 20 per cent being girls kept at home by their parents). This compares with 40 per cent school attendance in Egypt, 35 per cent in Iraq, 75 per cent in Syria. (Jordan's 80 per cent is largely accounted for by the UNRWA schools in the refugee camps.)

The contrasting liberal attitude is that the Arabs are, after all, Israeli citizens who were in the country before the Jews and who chose to "give Israel a chance" rather than run away. Few would question that the majority—like the majority of Arabs on the other side of the border, and indeed like most people anywhere—are law-abiding citizens who want a quiet life and are willing to honor, if not love, any government that rules justly. Yet they are treated in some ways as second-class citizens: they are not free to travel; their land can be taken away in what appears to them an arbitrary and hypocritical manner. And even if one discounts the exaggerations which the inevitable "ghetto mentality" of any minority engenders, there is a good deal of discrimination—some deliberate and some unavoidable. The result is that it is not easy to find an Arab in Israel who is not obsessed with the grievances of his community, both real and imaginary. The military administration in the frontier areas obviously holds first place among these grievances.

But there are others. Many of the 30,000 "internal refugees" have not been resettled more effectively than the refugees in the UNRWA camps across the border. For three years they were looked after by the Red Cross; then UNRWA took over until 1952, when they became "social cases" in the care of the Israeli government. Some are now settled in towns, particularly Nazareth, where they have swollen the population from 12,000 to 22,000. They can be readily inspected in such places as the Casa Nova, a Franciscan pilgrims' hostel which they took over as squatters. Some sixty Arab families have been living in its fifty rooms for the past ten years, and they have turned the once ornate hostel into a slum. Now the Franciscans are paying individual refugees $280 to leave. But it is not easy to find another place for them. Their own abandoned villages, to which they insist on returning rather than become the government's tenants in absentee-owned lands, or accept the inadequate compensation that was offered, have been razed for reasons of security.

The number of deserted villages destroyed by the army since the war of 1948-49 is not officially available, but one has only to drive around the country to confirm the estimate of a moderate-minded Arab spokesman that it runs to at least a hundred. One of these was Kfar Baram, an Arab village of 1,000 Maronite Christians, situated a mile from the Lebanese border; its story is worth examining in some detail.

KFAR BARAM now exists only as a heap of rubble: the Israeli army demolished it on September 16, 1953, security reasons being given as the explanation. The villagers now occupy houses deserted by Moslem refugees in the (poorer) village of Jeish, some three miles from the border. Their story (told to the writer by their priest and leader, Father Joseph Dusan) is substantially confirmed in newspaper files and from official sources. It well illustrates the tragic conflict of recent years.

In the 1948 war, a fortnight after the Israelis captured the village from the Arab Legion, an army officer ordered the villagers to cross the border into Lebanon. Rather than leave the country they hid for a week in the surrounding orchards. Then the authorities moved them to Jeish, with only their "essential belongings," on the understanding that they would return in a fortnight, or as soon as the Arab armies had been driven out: they have never been al-

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lowed to return and have never seen the belongings they left behind. The government now offers to lease them abandoned land and build new houses for them there—a handsome enough offer. But they refuse, obstinately asking to be allowed to return to their ruined village and rebuild it. Meantime a kibbutz has risen near the ruins of their former homes.

Not being an Arab, I was able to visit both the kibbutz and the deserted village. I found the kibbutz members indignant about the fate of Kfar Baram, this being in accordance with the general attitude of the Mapam party to which they are affiliated. They had not taken over more than a small portion of the village land for their own use, and had repeatedly stated to the authorities that there was room on the land both for themselves and for the villagers. Yet now, on a site adjoining the ruins of the village, workmen were clearing the ground for a new *moshav* (semi-cooperative village) which will obviously not be able to avoid using what remains of the Kfar Baram land. This was the news I brought back to Father Joseph.

The authorities justify this action on security grounds: in their original location, the villagers represented a security risk, and the destruction of Kfar Baram was meant to stop infiltrators from hiding there. Yet one cannot help wondering whether the security advantage is worth the loss of good will. There are, after all, a number of inhabited Arab villages even closer to the border than Kfar Baram, and it is hard to see what difference two miles can make to the prospects of a nocturnal infiltrator from across the Lebanese frontier. Nor is it likely to be much more difficult to hide among the ruins of Kfar Baram than in a village which is still intact.

It is not surprising that the former inhabitants of Kfar Baram—and the Arabs in Israel as a whole—have a different explanation for measures like these: they are convinced that what the government is after is the territory still belonging to the Arabs, and they can point to the fact that the land of every Arab village which was destroyed in 1948-49 is today being farmed, or about to be farmed, by Jewish immigrants. The problem is thus largely psychological. Most Israelis take it for granted that it is the mission of Israel to provide land for Jewish immigrants, and obviously some of it must come from Arabs. Most Arabs still remaining in Israel would scarcely understand the meaning of this proposition.

The gulf between the two communities also comes out in the very different manner in which purely economic questions are viewed. On a recent occasion Samuel Divon, Mr. Ben Gurion's chief adviser on Arab affairs, stated that there was a "deep-rooted conservatism among the Arab peasants which also helps to foster suspicion and reaction." As he put it, the Israeli authorities cannot very well supply water to a village unless there is a body representing the villagers that is competent to sign contracts, collect payments, and distribute the water. On the other hand, one cannot force an Arab village to elect a local council, and in fact, out of 102 Arab villages in Israel only 14 have such elected councils. Even if one includes the town population, less than half the Arabs in Israel have any kind of local representation. The Israeli government's policy, to quote Divon once more, is "to get the leaders among the Arabs together and then get them to put pressure on the villagers." To this end a six-day seminar has recently been arranged where some sixty Arab teachers had an opportunity to discuss matters of this kind with government officials.

CAN any conclusion be wrung from so many contradictions?

One at least would seem to be that the authorities are honestly trying to do something about the problem. Another is that, before success can come within sight, certain pre-conditions must be met.

Above all, the authorities will not only have to do more teaching, but must also be willing to learn. The present writer was assured by an official not long ago that one reason why the villagers of Kfar Kana, near

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Nazareth, had not been supplied with drinking water was that this would interfere with a cherished local custom: the young men of the village liked to watch the girls fetch water from the well, and this was in fact their only chance of choosing a bride. When I happened to be in Kfar Kana, I gathered from the inhabitants that not only was the story without any foundation (it is a Christian village where there is ample opportunity for meetings between the sexes), but that this explanation had been given as a joke to a visiting government official when he inquired into local conditions. The authorities might well try a little harder to penetrate the psychology of the people of Kfar Kana and other places as well.

More generally and more important, a fundamental pre-condition of better relations between the two communities would be the disappearance of a particularly distressing attitude widespread among Israelis. It is an attitude compounded of fear, indifference, and superiority, which takes the form of dismissing as hopeless the prospect of turning the Arabs into genuine citizens of the state. The standard remark, which one hears with disturbing frequency among the less enlightened whenever one brings up the subject of the Arab minority, goes something like this: "What can you expect? Look at what they are doing to us, and anyway they are not like us—they're Arabs. Besides, you can't trust them an inch."

As long as this state of mind lasts, there is little hope for improvement. Meanwhile, something could be done simply by a few generous gestures—such as letting the Kfar Baram villagers go back to their deserted village, even if it means putting a few extra soldiers on the comparatively quiet Lebanese border.

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# THE SEPHARDIM OF NEW LOTS

## *Self-Containment and Expansion*

LEONARD PLOTNIK

IN THE New Lots district, situated in the midst of the East New York, Brownsville, Crown Heights, and East Flatbush sections of Brooklyn, which together make up the most densely populated Jewish area in the world, lies an enclave with a peculiar character all its own. Where Linden Boulevard bends around East New York to link Brooklyn with Queens, five square blocks of narrow streets, made irregular by the wide sweep of Linden Boulevard and the weed-covered fields that gave New Lots its name, form a tranquil middle-class neighborhood. Here, in this enclosed little world, live a thousand Sephardic families who have built a society modeled after the Levantine countries which they left a generation or two ago.

The homes of the Sephardim are small one- or two-story affairs of sand-colored brick with double-decker porches and large back yards profuse with vegetable gardens and grape arbors. The iron fences around the houses enclose thick rows of hedges and umbrella trees, and the wooden porch railings and window frames are painted a deep green. The hushed streets of the neighborhood are dotted with a sprinkling of old-fashioned shops: a corner drug store, a tiny penny-candy store, a few coffeehouses, and an Oriental grocery featuring imported cheeses and Turkish delicacies, with strings of red onions, garlic, and dried mushrooms in the window. The synagogues here are very unlike the Hasidic *shtibels* or the Orthodox *shuls* found just on the other side of New Lots Avenue. They are small and neat, adorned with stained glass windows and displaying signs in black and gold that blend the ancient Hebrew congregational nomenclature with the names of minor Balkan and Turkish towns: Peace and Brotherhood of Monastir, Hessed V'Emet of Castoria, and Keter Zion, Ankoralese.

The men congregate nightly in the coffeehouses, but women are never seen there. Their place is in the home, where they wash and cook endlessly, preparing meals according to Turkish, Greek, Syrian, and Spanish recipes: skewered lamb and rice, chopped meat wrapped in pickled grape leaves, and dishes redolent of Oriental spices, almond, kesablanca and keshkeval cheese. When they are not busy cooking, they bustle about their porches in cotton dresses, golden Stars of David gleaming on their bosoms.

The *Magen David,* worn by men and women alike, has a very special meaning for the Sephardi—it signifies his separateness not only from the world of the Gentiles but from the world of other Jews as well. For the Sephardim do not call themselves "Jews" and the word "Jewish" is never used in Spanish New Lots except in derision; their own centers, clubs, and organizations are always clearly labeled "Sephardic." The term "Jew" is reserved for the Ashkenazim who are also called "Yudaks" or "Zug-zugs," the latter being, moreover, a mocking term for Yiddish, a language the Spanish Jews consider a vulgar jargon, as their own Ladino —an archaic Spanish interspersed with Turkish, Greek, and Latin words—is not.

The difference between Ashkenazic and Sephardic ways can be seen most clearly in the elaborate ritual gatherings of New Lots, especially during funerals and the ob-

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LEONARD PLOTNIK, who with this article makes his first appearance in COMMENTARY, was educated at Yeshiva University, Dropsie College in Philadelphia, and New York University. He has published articles and stories in the *New York Times Magazine, Coronet,* and elsewhere.



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servance of death anniversaries, which are the heart of Sephardic religious observance. When a Sephardi passes away, he is attended in death not only by his family but by all the members of his fraternal society. In accordance with strict Sephardic tradition, twenty-five of the deceased man's fraternal brothers, along with the Chevrah Kadishah (burial society), wash and clothe the body in shroud and prayer shawl. Then a funeral procession led by a goatee'd rabbi winds its way through the streets amid the throngs, reciting psalms and intoning prayers. When the procession passes the synagogues, the doors are opened to display the Holy Ark. In the cemetery after the interment, the coffin coverings are spread upon the ground and decked out by the men with keshkeval cheese, rolls, and eggs (baked hard and brown) which the vast assembly eats for the remainder of the afternoon against a background of wailing and psalm reciting. Then, during the entire week of mourning, each member of the congregation pays his respects to the family.

UNVEILING and *yahrtzeit* ceremonies present another contrast to Ashkenazic ritual. The unveiling—which among Ashkenazim is a brief affair—involves for Sephardim a day-long ceremony at the cemetery, where professional caterers take care of the refreshments. *Yahrtzeit* observance, called *meldare,* is held at the home of the immediate family, and is also more elaborate than among other Jews. Ashkenazim simply light a *yahrtzeit* glass and recite the memorial prayer, *Kaddish,* with a *minyan,* but the Sephardim spend the whole day of the death anniversary chanting psalms and prayers and serving refreshments, while their rabbis deliver eulogies of the dead and lead discussions of Sephardic traditions. On the other hand, the Sephardim attach much less importance to the collective memorial service (called *Annos*), which they hold on the eve of Yom Kippur, than the Ashkenazim do to their *yizkor* ceremony.

The differences between the Sephardim and their Ashkenazic neighbors are not confined to ritual observances. Indeed they are so far-reaching and profound that "intermarriages" are opposed by both sides, and very often do not work out in practice. This is not entirely the fault of the Sephardic community. Most Ashkenazim, especially those unschooled in Jewish history, consider the Sephardim little different from Gentiles. Their swarthy skin, "strange" language, "funny pronunciation of *loshen kodesh,*" and "peculiar" social and religious customs all seem un-Jewish. Even their family names—Alcalay, Toledano, Razon—which the Sephardim have kept jealously for centuries, make them suspect in Ashkenazic eyes.

The attitude of the Sephardim is more complicated. On the one hand, they regard themselves as aristocrats, the descendants of the ancient Israelite nobility and the inheritors of the glories of Jewish civilization in Spain. They look down upon the Ashkenazim as a "mixed multitude" of Jews who are descended from the rabble of Jerusalem and whose blood has an admixture of a Slavic element—as evidence they cite the "un-Semitic" blond hair and high cheek bones of many Ashkenazim. And in their turn they are no less suspicious of Ashkenazic food, religious customs, Yiddish, and the Ashkenazic pronunciation of Hebrew.

On the other hand, the Sephardim are acutely aware that there has been a falling-off of their life from the cultural level reached by medieval Spanish Jewry, and they attribute this to the decline that set in among the Spanish Jews after their expulsion in 1492. The Sephardim know that they are poorer in Jewish learning than their Ashkenazic cousins—that, in fact, it is the Ashkenazim who keep alive the heritage of Maimonides, Judah Halevi, and other great lights of medieval Spanish Jewry, and that it is Ashkenazic drive and initiative which mold Jewish life in America. Perhaps this knowledge accounts for their tendency to cut themselves off from the present, to live in a little self-contained world where they need not compete with the more energetic Ashkenazim—where they can sink back comfortably into the proud, suspicious,

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lethargic life of a small Levantine community mainly concerned with its own internal affairs, feuds, and family politics.

Israel Zangwill's classic portrayal of the Sephardi in 19th-century London, *King of Schnorrers,* shows that in some respects the American Sephardim are not unlike their kind in other parts of the world. American Sephardim are neither so poor nor so arrogant as Zangwill's Schnorrer, but they are equally vulnerable. And to understand them one must know their history.

THE word Sephardi is derived from *Sepharad,* the ancient Hebrew name for the Iberian Peninsula. Rabbi Hai Gaon, the head of a 10th-century Talmudical academy in Babylon, and Moses ibn Ezra, a 12th-century Spanish Jewish poet, both claimed that the first Jewish settlement in Spain was made up of members of the royal families of Judea, who fled there when the First Temple was destroyed by Nebuchadnezzar. Julius Caesar also mentioned the Jews of Iberia in his writings. By the 7th century C.E., after the destruction of the great Talmudic schools of Syria and Babylonia, Spain had become the center of Jewish cultural achievement. For the next seven hundred years it witnessed an era of Jewish scholarship far brighter and greater than any that followed it, thanks largely to the tolerance of the Moors who had conquered most of Spain. Even in those parts of Northern Spain where the Christians ruled, Jews were treated more tolerantly than in the rest of medieval Europe. Along with Christians and Moslems, Jews taught in the leading universities, managed royal treasuries, were among the leading physicians, merchants, and diplomats.

The Moors, heirs to ancient Greek science and philosophy, provided a particularly stimulating environment for Jewish scholars. A new kind of rabbi developed, who was at once astronomer, physician, philosopher, and financial wizard. In addition, these men wrote Hebrew grammars, commentaries on the Bible and the Talmud, and Hebrew poetry.

This prosperity was not shared by Jews in other parts of Europe whose position became more and more difficult with the advent of the First Crusade in 1096. Jews were driven from France, England, and Italy into miserable ghettos of the Germanic kingdoms and pressed eastward to Poland where they became targets for the Teutonic knights and bloodthirsty fanatics who had joined in the Crusades. It was in these early ghettos that the Yiddish language was born and there too the name *Ashkenazim* (from the Hebrew designation for Germany) originated.

The earlier Crusades had little effect on the Jews of Christian Spain. They continued to prosper and many of them even married into the Christian nobility. However, as the Christian kings began to drive out the Moslems during the 12th and 13th centuries, the situation of the Jews steadily worsened. Ironically enough, it was the Moors, made desperate by repeated defeat at the hands of the Christians and pushed at last into a small corner of Granada, who were the first to oppress the Jews. The great Maimonides was among the many forced to flee Granada in the 13th century. By the 14th century—a time of increased power for the Church and of outbreaks of the Black Plague—the Christians of Spain were also actively persecuting Jews, killing or selling into slavery those who would not submit to baptism. Finally, in 1492, came the edict of Ferdinand and Isabella expelling all Jews from Spain.

For the most part the exiles went to Portugal, North Africa, and Italy. But a great many others went to Moslem Turkey and its Balkan possessions. The Ottoman Turks had been devastating the Byzantine Empire, laying waste much of the Balkans, the vast regions of Macedonia, Thrace, the Gallipoli peninsula, Andrianopolis, Constantinople, and Rodasto, and they welcomed the Jewish refugees from Iberia as settlers who could repopulate these ransacked areas. The skills and accomplishments of the Jews were sorely needed by the backward Turks, who gave them considerable power and freedom, which they repaid by establishing vast new commercial centers in the Aegean—the prin-

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cipal one being Salonica. This port city in time overtook Venice, Genoa, and Spain itself in the competition for the Mediterranean trade.

In his daily life, the 15th- and early 16th-century Sephardic Jew of the Ottoman Empire was hardly distinguishable from his Turkish upper-class neighbor or from the nobility. Except for minor details (for example, no Jewish business could operate in the immediate vicinity of a mosque), Jews had equal rights and participated freely in the social life of the Empire. In turn, they considered Islam a sister religion rather than an enemy. Jewish communal leaders were invited to Friday evening services in the mosques and Dervish houses, and they found no religious reason for not attending.

Sephardic success in the Balkans was, however, of short duration. Soon after the close of the 16th century, the entire structure of Ottoman Jewry collapsed, and in time the Jews sank to the ranks of the ignorant laboring classes of the Turkish Empire. There seems to have been no shattering blow—neither natural catastrophe nor war nor a sudden wave of persecution—that leveled the religious and moral traditions of the Ottoman Jews to that degree of ignorance and superstition to which they ultimately sank. In part, the cause was the succession of Christian Venice to Mohammedan Salonica as the major trading center for the Orient. Then, too, the increase of English, French, and Dutch commerce which began to flood the Mediterranean market with cheap, factory-made textiles, ruined untold numbers of Jewish artisans. At the same time the missionary schools established by various Western countries in the Balkans brought Western skills and sciences to Greeks and Armenians, who were soon entering the fields of jurisprudence and medicine, once largely the domain of Jews. Only in Salonica, where the Jews were a vast majority, did they retain their predominance.

While the material prosperity of Sephardic Jewry in the Balkans was undermined by Western industrial competition and their social status endangered by the rise of an Armenian and Greek intelligentsia, their communal and religious life was disrupted by the after-effects of Sabbatai Zevi's Messianic movement. By the time Sabbatai Zevi died a forced convert to Islam in 1676, all of Jewry had been split into his followers and opponents. The Ashkenazic community turned, occasional backslidings notwithstanding, from the obscurities of the Cabbala and the emotional fervor of Messianism back to the rationality of Talmudic study. But the Sephardim, lacking the recuperative powers of their Ashkenazic cousins, sank over the centuries from Cabbalistic obscurantism into superstition. In the end they had little to sustain them but their ancestral pride and their inbred family life.

When, around the turn of the 19th century, Turkey lost its empire and the newly formed nations that emerged as a result began persecuting their minorities, many Sephardic Jews decided to emigrate. The upper classes mostly went to Western Europe, and the poorer laborers who could not pay for their own passage were brought to the United States under the auspices of shipping agencies and philanthropic organizations like HIAS (Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society). The first Sephardic community in New York was established on the Lower East Side—along Grand, Rivington, and Allen Streets—next to the larger area already settled by Jewish immigrants from East Europe. After the end of World War I a flood of immigrants from Turkey and the Balkans swelled the ranks of this community, which then overflowed into other neighborhoods.

A NUMBER of Sephardic Jews from Salonica, consisting primarily of the wealthier class and some of the more skilled of the laboring class, settled in the Bronx along the upper reaches of the Grand Concourse in the vicinity of Yankee Stadium. A small group of Castoralis Jews, led by their rabbi, Robert Ouziel, moved to the Bensonhurst section of Brooklyn, close to the Syrian Sephardic community. Still another small band of Castoralis and some Monastirlis

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settled along Neptune Avenue in the Coney Island district. But the largest new community to be founded was in the New Lots section of East New York. Here some two thousand families from all parts of the Balkans and Turkey established themselves among the truck farms and goat farms that still existed on the outskirts of the teeming Jewish neighborhoods of Brownsville and East New York.

The first Sephardic immigrants were for the most part male. Some were already married and hoped to earn enough money to send for their families quickly. The women came between 1900 and 1920, either to join their husbands or to marry "townsmen" in America to whom they had been betrothed by parents or relatives at home. There were also some orphans and girls from destitute families whom friends and relatives brought over and provided for.

Generally the women, too, were of lower-class origin and illiterate, and they accepted without question the code of the Levantine society which their men had perpetuated in New Lots. Indeed their own role was an outstanding feature of that code, shutting them off as it did from the world outside their own homes. For them, there was only the family: an arranged marriage in which love was not necessarily part of the bargain; the house, children, and female relatives. To this day Sephardic women have little voice in family affairs and none at all in community affairs, and even the youngest male has more to say than his mother. A young woman who marries the eldest son of a particular household will live with her in-laws, because the first-born son is traditionally expected to stay with his parents even after his marriage and to take care of them when they are too old to work. It is not at all uncommon to find two or more generations of a Sephardic family living under one roof. In such cases the house, and particularly the kitchen, is run by the mother-in-law, or, if she is vigorous enough, by the grandmother.

In addition to her husband and mother-in-law, the Sephardic woman must also contend with the supreme authority of the oldest brother whose advice, regardless of his economic status, is always solicited in family matters and whose decision can be contested only by an appeal to the local rabbi. When such mediation is sought, the rabbi usually settles the case in the brother's favor.

THE greatest change for Sephardic women in America was the removal of the restriction against their having jobs. In the old Ottoman world, it was considered shameful for girls to work outside the home, and only extreme circumstances could drive them into the Smyrna tobacco factories, the mills of Salonica, or even into service as housemaids and children's nurses. In the New World, however, the men demanded that their women seek employment in the garment district. Even when their earnings were not strictly needed to make ends meet, daughters were urged to find jobs at a very early age and contribute at least half of their incomes to the household. This practice made it impossible for the great majority of the first generation of Sephardic girls born in America to obtain more than an elementary school education.

The men, having been unskilled laborers in their countries of origin, also sought employment in the garment trade. Guided by Jewish institutions and aided by their Ashkenazic fellow workers, they became operators, pressers, and cutters. In time a number of them worked their way up into manufacturing and wholesaling, particularly in the ladies' skirt, sportswear, and underwear lines. But neither Sephardic bosses nor workers ever joined the trade associations and the unions which had been founded in the garment industry during the first two decades of the century, preferring to solve their labor problems within their own fraternal societies and clubs. These organizations, which bear names like Peace and Brotherhood of Monastir, not only furnished the Sephardim with machinery for settling labor disputes, but provided—and continue to provide—the framework of Sephardic social life.

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As their names indicate, the clubs are organized along geographical lines, each one restricted to people from a particular town or province in the old country; most members are related by blood or marriage as well, which makes the association even more powerful. The clubs have in effect established on American soil an exact replica of the 19th-century Levantine society now crumbling to pieces on its home grounds. The physical centers of this society are the coffeehouses where the members assemble nightly for companionship, for gossip, for endless caucusing on family, clan, and community affairs, for games of pinochle, gin rummy, and backgammon, and for the smoking of water pipes. Here marriages and funerals are arranged, business deals are closed, reputations are made and ruined, fine points of ritual are settled.

This world of the coffeehouse is a man's world, and one which, by the usual Sephardic standards, is remarkably relaxed. If, at home, the Sephardi is very much the severe pater-familias, and in his contacts with the outside world the aloof Spanish hidalgo, he is, in the male world of the coffeehouse, definitely one of the "boys." This sense of belonging which the male Sephardi feels from the time he is old enough to see the inside of a coffeehouse to the day he is too old to attend, may be what lies behind the enduring cohesiveness of Sephardic society.

But the price the Sephardi has paid for the emotional security of belonging to a small, tightly knit group has been his isolation from the world at large. The divisiveness characteristic of Levantine society not only has kept the Sephardi cut off from his non-Jewish neighbor and from his Ashkenazic brother, but has also resulted in the setting up of barriers within the Sephardic community itself. Each fraternal society, each family clan is a law unto itself, jealous of its independence, determined not to yield an inch to anyone on the smallest point of ritual or of etiquette. Until quite recently Sephardim from Turkey would not eat, much less worship, with Sephardim from Yugoslavia, nor would they permit their children to intermarry. The result was a complete inability to cope with any situation, such as the need to establish schools, that required resources larger than those available to any one club.

An attempt to remedy this situation was undertaken in 1936 by Dr. Isaac Alcalay upon his arrival in the United States from Yugoslavia. This Rabbinic scholar had been a Yugoslav senator and a confidant of the late King Alexander and is deeply loved and honored by the Sephardic communities. He inspired a desire in the local leaders to unify and elevate the cultural level of the community, and the result was the creation of the Central Sephardic Community of the United States and Canada. However, this organization never managed to accomplish much more than a membership list.

Even after the Sephardim had been in America for a full generation their isolation from American culture in general persisted, mainly because the Sephardic community lacked the two elements which among other immigrant groups facilitated integration into American life. There were no Sephardi intellectuals to serve as mediators between their own people and the culture of the new land, and there was no rebellious youth ready to question the inbred ways of the older generation. The second generation, like the first, was content to stay close to the coffeehouses and work in the shops of the garment center. Those few who left the familiar groove entered professions like the law where they could utilize family connections.

This acquiescence in the status quo, this penchant for staying close to home—itself a carry-over from Sephardic isolationism—served further to isolate the Sephardim from Jewish life in America. The Ashkenazic community, physically contained though it was during the first few decades of this century in the ghettos of the Lower East Side and of the Bronx and Brooklyn, was nevertheless steadily expanding its horizons. Its workers were organizing the needle trades unions, its young men and women were entering the professions, its intellectuals

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and artists creating a culture of their own and helping to give tone and color to the work of a whole generation of younger writers and artists. Across all difference in ideology, customs, and dialect the Ashkenazic Jews were drawn together into a unified body by their common aspiration to improve themselves socially and economically, to become a part of America. The Sephardim, on the other hand, were unable to transcend the mores of the old world, and as a result they remained divided into a multiplicity of small communities, each with its own narrow religious prejudices, individual culinary tastes, and linguistic idiosyncrasy.

However, since World War II, New Lots has witnessed a quiet social revolution which is gradually easing the Sephardic community out of its isolation. There is a growing sense of inadequacy within the community, a gathering doubt about the rightness of their old ways. The second generation of American-born Sephardim is growing up and the pervading influencing of school, the newspapers, the movies, and television, along with the contacts they make in their jobs, have slowly been subverting some of the more outlandish taboos of their elders. Today Castoralis freely marry Monastirlis, Angoralis, and Salonicalis, bringing clans and clubs closer together. Moreover, the older generation itself is growing indulgent. As in postwar America at large, small Sephardic contractors have become large manufacturers, workers are making more money than ever before, and this prosperity has given the Sephardim a greater feeling of security than they have had for centuries. They now have a larger stake in American life, and they take a correspondingly larger interest in it. But the spearhead of the change has been two elements of the younger generation: the new suburbanites and the army veterans (who often are the same people).

For several years now a perceptible exodus from New Lots has been going on, mainly to the better neighborhoods of East Flatbush and the more exclusive areas of Long Island, and the chief result for the Sephardic community is that young Sephardim have become familiar with the new suburban Jewish centers. Even where they have not actually joined the center, they have sent their children to its religious school. They cannot help thinking that in the New Lots of their childhood there was no Hebrew school and that to this day most of their synagogues are open only on the High Holidays. And they cannot help comparing the modern seminary-trained Ashkenazic rabbis with the lay sexton-rabbis of New Lots who also double as secretaries of the burial societies, as *mohelim* for circumcisions, and as marriage brokers (except for several notable exceptions, there are no formally trained Sephardic rabbis throughout the country). A vague sense of inadequacy has made itself felt among these young Sephardim and through them to the community in general, an understanding that the small societies which dominated the Sephardic world were too poor and too caught up in their internal bickerings to furnish the basis for the kind of communal life demanded by the 20th century. What was needed, clearly, was an over-all Sephardic organization larger than the coffee shop and the local fraternal society, but all previous attempts to found such a federation had fallen victim to the apathy and indifference of the older generation and the determined opposition of the lay rabbis.

It took the push of the war veterans, who had been forced out of the narrow confines of the New Lots coffeehouses, to build, finally, a congregation embracing members of more than one fraternal society. In 1953 a group of some two hundred young Sephardim of American birth chartered a Conservative congregation under the name of Congregation Tifereth Bachurim, or the United Sephardim of Brooklyn. They leased a synagogue in New Lots from an Orthodox Sephardic congregation who worship there only irregularly. Since there was no qualified Sephardic rabbi to take over the new pulpit, the congregation invited an Ashkenazi. The first man to accept the

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position rather quickly moved on to a chaplaincy in the army, but the second rabbi—Arnold B. Marans, a graduate of the Jewish Theological Seminary—stayed on.

Within a few short years, Rabbi Marans evolved a program for the congregation involving regular services (held in the authentic Sephardic style perpetuated by congregations like the Spanish and Portuguese Synagogue in New York), and a modern Hebrew school. With considerable help from the increasing number of Ashkenazic wives, he is trying to get the congregation to understand his "Yudak" ideals of Jewish social welfare, to give them a deeper sense of belonging to the American Jewish community, and to get them to act on the social and cultural problems it faces. This is not an easy process, for though the community likes and respects Rabbi Marans personally, the older people have not yet entirely accepted him as one of their own. And even the younger people, for all their willingness to Americanize their community life, still operate very much in an "old country" spirit.

Nowhere can this curious combination of American forms and Levantine spirit be seen more clearly than in the secular operations of the United Sephardim of Brooklyn. Its constitution and by-laws are straight out of Robert's rules of parliamentary procedure, but in practice these rules are often more honored in the breach than in the observance. If, for example, a difference of opinion threatens, the chairman, rather than let things come to a vote that would result in a loss of face for the defeated party, takes things into his own hands, in due time confronts the members with a *fait accompli*, and is reimbursed for any expenses he may have incurred. In the synagogue, the president takes care of things in a similar manner. "It's a wonderful system, really," Rabbi Marans said the other day, smiling. "When I find myself short of funds for the synagogue or the school, all I have to do is call the president at his office in the morning, and that very afternoon the money is ready for us."

A LATE Friday evening service of the new congregation forcefully brings home the changes that have overtaken Sephardic New Lots. The sanctuary, conforming to the architecture of the building itself, has a triangular shape. One enters through a small ante-room at the apex, which contains a fount of oil surrounded by flaming wicks in commemoration of the *meldares* of deceased members. Above the fount a huge bronze plaque, reaching to the ceiling, bears the inscription "Congregation of Peace and Brotherhood of Monastir, Inc." and underneath, "The Havra Kedusha Shel Rohesim of Ahavath Shalom of Monastir." Below the names and titles of the older generation and its burial society appear the names of officers and founders of the new congregation itself. On the adjacent wall hangs a large colored portrait of the late Solomon Pardo, who during his lifetime was one of the most respected leaders of the community.

Long rows of seats, fanning out from the point of entrance to the platform, curve at the broad base and are filled to capacity, with men and women seated together. The service features Spanish hymns and music of Turkish origin, freely adapted from the songs of the Mahlavaneh or Dervish houses where the high-ranking Jewish officials of the old Sultans went on Friday nights to pay their respects to Moslem colleagues.

The congregation is young, made up of men and women in their twenties, thirties, and forties. They might easily be taken for ordinary middle-class Americans as they sit there in their well-cut clothes, prosperous and at peace. And yet there is still something exotic about them, with their swarthy complexions, their aquiline noses, their large smoldering eyes. It is still too early to say whether they will remain a distinct community of their own, but they seem to have a feeling of pride in being Sephardim that constantly drives them from the quiet streets of their suburban homes back to New Lots, and chances are that they will continue to resist assimilation into the Ashkenazic community.

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# BY COZZENS POSSESSED

## *A Review of Reviews*

DWIGHT MACDONALD

THE most alarming literary news in years is the enormous success of James Gould Cozzens' *By Love Possessed.** It sold 170,000 copies in the first six weeks of publication—more than all eleven of the author's previous novels put together. At this writing, it has been at the top of the best-seller lists for two months. Hollywood and the *Reader's Digest* have paid $100,000 apiece for the privilege of wreaking their wills upon it. And the *New Yorker* published a cartoon—one matron to another: "I was looking forward to a few weeks of just doing nothing after Labor Day when along came James Gould Cozzens."

There's nothing new in all this—after all, *something* has to be the No. 1 Best-Seller at any given moment. What is new appears if one considers Grace Metalious' *Peyton Place,* which was at the top for a full year, before *By Love Possessed* displaced it. *Peyton Place* is a familiar kind of best-seller, a pedestrian job, an artifact rather than a work of art (putting it mildly) that owes its popularity to nothing more subtle than a remarkably heavy charge of Sex; perhaps its best-known predecessor is *Forever Amber,* fabricated a decade ago by another notably untalented lady. But Cozzens is not of the company of Kathleen Winsor, Edna Ferber, Daphne Du Maurier, Lloyd C. Douglas, and other such humble, though well-paid, artisans. Nor can he be "placed" at the middle level of best-sellerdom, that of writers like Herman Wouk, John Hersey, and Irwin Shaw, nor even (perhaps) on the empyrean heights occupied by Marquand and Steinbeck. He is a "serious" writer, and never more serious than in this book. That so uncompromising a work, written in prose of an artificiality and complexity that approaches the impenetrable—indeed often achieves it—that this should have become what the publishers gloatingly call "a runaway best-seller" is something new. How do those matrons cope with it, I wonder. Perhaps their very innocence in literary matters is a help—an Australian aboriginal would probably find *Riders of the Purple Sage* as hard to read as *The Golden Bowl.*

The requirements of the mass market explain a good deal of bad writing today. But Cozzens here isn't writing down, he is obviously giving it the works: *By Love Possessed* is his bid for immortality. It is Literature or it is nothing. Unfortunately none of the reviewers has seriously considered the second alternative. The book is not only a best-seller, it is a *succès d'estime.* Such reviews, such enthusiasm, such unanimity, such nonsense! The only really hostile review I have been able to find was by William Buckley, Jr., of all people, in his *National Review.* Granted that he was somewhat motivated by a non-literary consideration—the book is lengthily anti-Catholic—still I thought his deflation skillful and just.

Looking through Alice Payne Hackett's *Sixty Years of Best Sellers,* I find among the top ten novels between 1935 and 1955 just seven that I would call in any way "serious," namely: Wolfe's *Of Time and the River* (1935), Huxley's *Eyeless in Gaza* (1936), Virginia Woolf's *The Years* (1937), Steinbeck's *The Grapes of Wrath* (1939), Hemingway's *For Whom the Bell Tolls* (1941), Norman Mailer's *The Naked and the Dead* (1948), and James Jones's *From Here to Eternity* (1951). About one every three years, with a significant falling off in the last decade. It is a slim harvest, in both

*Harcourt, Brace, 570 pp., $5.00.

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ACCORDING to DWIGHT MACDONALD, the phenomenal success of James Gould Cozzens' *By Love Possessed* indicates a new trend in American middlebrow culture. Mr. Macdonald is a *New Yorker* staff writer. His latest book, *Memoirs of a Revolutionist,* was reviewed in the November COMMENTARY.



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quantity and quality, but the difference between the least of these and *By Love Possessed* is the difference between a work of art on some level and to some extent achieved, and one that falls below any reasonable literary criterion. Yet the reviewers almost to a man behaved as if they were possessed. This sincere enthusiasm for a mediocre work is more damaging to literary standards than any amount of cynical ballyhoo. One can guard against the Philistines outside the gates. It is when they get into the Ivory Tower that they are dangerous.*

THERE seems little doubt that *By Love Possessed* has been selling on the strength of the reviews. (Word-of-mouth comment has probably worked the other way; I've found only two people who liked it, and the most common reply is: "I couldn't read it.") All the commercially important journals reviewed it prominently and enthusiastically. The Sunday *Times* and *Herald Tribune* book sections gave it front-page reviews, by Malcolm Cowley ("one of the country's truly distinguished novelists") and Jessamyn West ("Rich, Wise, Major Novel of Love"). *Time* put Cozzens on the cover —Herman Wouk was there a year or two ago—and pronounced *By Love Possessed* "the best American novel in years." Orville Prescott in the *Times* thought it "magnificent," Edward Weeks in the *Atlantic* found it "wise and compassionate," and Whitney Balliett in the *Saturday Review* divined in it "the delicate and subtle tension between action and thought that is the essence of balanced fiction."

The most extraordinary performances were those of Brendan Gill in the *New Yorker* and John Fischer in *Harper's*. The former praised it in terms that might have been thought a trifle excessive if he had been writing about *War and Peace:* "a masterpiece . . . the author's masterpiece . . . almost anybody's masterpiece . . . supremely satisfying . . . an immense achievement . . . spellbinding . . . masterpiece." The mood is lyrical, stammering with heartfelt emotion: "No American novelist of the twentieth century has attempted more than Mr. Cozzens attempts in the course of this long and bold and delicate book, which, despite its length, one reads through at headlong speed and is then angry with oneself for having reached the end so precipitately."

Mr. Fischer was more coherent but equally emphatic. Speaking from "the Editor's Easy Chair," as *Harper's* quaintly styles it, he headed his piece: "NOMINATION FOR A NOBEL PRIZE," and he meant it. For one slip or another—sentimentality, neuroticism, subjectivism, sloppy plot construction, or habitual use of "characters who are in one way or another in revolt against society"—he faults all the other competitors (the habitual-use-of-deleterious-characters rap alone disposes of Faulkner, Hemingway, Steinbeck, Algren, Mailer, Capote, Bellow, Jones, Paul Bowles, and Tennessee Williams) until finally James Gould Cozzens stands out in superb isolation, a monument of normality, decency, and craftsmanship.†

The provincial reviewers followed their leaders: "COZZENS PENS ENDURING TALE" (Cleveland *News*), "ONE OF THE GREAT NOVELS OF THE PRESENT CENTURY" (San Francisco *Call-Bulletin*), "finest American novel I have read in many a year" (Bernardine Kielty in the *Ladies' Home Journal*), "COZZENS WRITES ABSORBING STORY IN EXCELLENT AND PROFOUND NOVEL" (Alice Dixon Bond in the Boston *Herald;* her column is called "The Case for Books"—is there an adjacent feature, "The Case Against Books"?). Leslie Hanscom in the New York *World-Telegram*—there are provincials in big cities, too—was impressed by Cozzens' "awesome scrupulosity as an artist." Mr. Hanscom's scrupulosity as a critic inspires

*A similar case of demoniacal possession took place in London in 1956 apropos of Colin Wilson's *The Outsider.*

†Actually, even according to Mr. Fischer's absurd standards, Cozzens doesn't deserve this eminence. He is not "a classic mind operating in a romantic period" nor does his novel run counter to "the Gothic extravagance of current fiction"; as I shall show, his mind lacks clarity, control, and form—the typical classic virtues—and his prose is as Gothic as Harkness Memorial Quadrangle (also as unaesthetic). As for the alleged normality of his characters—"ordinary people, living ordinary lives, in ordinary circumstances" with whom the reader "can identify himself as he never can with the characters of an Algren or a Mailer"—they are normal only on the surface; once this is broken through, they are as neurotic and fantastic in their behavior as other current fictional people. The chief difference is that their creator often doesn't realize it.

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little awe; "Hemingway and Faulkner, move over!" he summed up. The frankest of the provincials was Carl Victor Little in the Houston *Press*: "The *N.Y. Times, Saturday Review* and other publications have taken out of the ivory tower the most accomplished critics available to join in the hallelujahs. So about all I can do is ditto the dithyrambs."

The literary quarterlies have not yet been heard from, but the liberal weeklies have. They didn't exactly ditto the dithyrambs, except for Granville Hicks in the *New Leader*: ". . . a novel to which talk of greatness is not irrelevant." But they didn't exactly veto them, either. Howard Nemerov in the *Nation*, Sarel Eimerl in the *New Republic*, and Richard Ellmann in the *Reporter* were all critical but respectful.

Mr. Nemerov's review I thought especially interesting. He was much alive to the use of the novel by the middlebrow reviewers as a stick to beat the highbrows, but, like Ellmann and Eimerl, not at all alive to what seems to me the chief defect of a very defective novel: the atrocious style. My first thought was that this is odd because Nemerov is a poet. My second was that perhaps that's the trouble. Our taste may have been corrupted not only by mass culture but also by its opposite—as we learned in old Doctor Engels' dialectical kindergarten, opposites are first cousins—the anything-goes subjective style which some of our painters and poets have evolved as a protest against, and an escape from, mass culture. After all, *By Love Possessed* is not much harder to read than most contemporary poetry.

PERHAPS we should now take a look at what Cozzens has to say in *By Love Possessed*, and how he says it. The normative hero is Arthur Winner, a reputable, middle-aged lawyer and family man who is exposed, during the two days and nights covered by the action, to a variety of unsettling experiences, which stimulate in him some even more unnerving memories. Winner is presented as a good man—kind, reasonable, sensitive, decent—and so he is taken by the reviewers: "The grandest moral vision in all Cozzens' work—a passionately good, passionately religious, yet wholly secular man, whose very failures are only bad dreams" (Balliett), "intelligent, successful, tolerant . . . the quintessence of our best qualities" (Gill). I'm unwilling to go farther than the Kansas City *Star*: "thoroughly honest, genteel, devoted to his work, and conscientious." Passion seems to me just what is most obviously missing in Arthur Winner; he's about as passionate as a bowl of oatmeal.

He is, in fact, a prig. His responses to the many appeals made to him in the course of the story—he's always on top, handing down advice and help, a great temptation to priggishness—while decent enough in form ("genteel") are in reality ungenerous and self-protective. To a Catholic lady who tries to justify her faith: "Where there are differences in religion, I think it generally wiser not to discuss them." To a seduced girl's father, who has flourished a gun: "Be very careful! Return the gun; and meanwhile, show it to no one else. Don't take it out of your pocket; and don't consider pointing it. Pointing a weapon is a separate indictable offense, and would get you an additional fine, and an additional jail term." To his teen-age daughter, who wants to go dancing: "A real gone band? I believe I grasp your meaning. Clearly a good place to know. Where is it?" "Oh, it's called the Old Timbers Tavern. It's down toward Mechanicsville, not far." "Yes; I've heard of it. And I'm afraid, whatever the reputed quality of the band, I must ask you not to go there." "Oh, Father!" That he is right in each case, that the Catholic lady is addlewitted, that the father is a fool and a braggart, that the Old Timbers Tavern is in fact no place for a young girl to go—all this is beside the point. A prig is one who delights in demonstrating his superiority on small occasions, and it is precisely when he has a good case that he rises to the depths of prigocity.

Although Winner behaves like a prig, he is not meant to be one, if only because the main theme of the novel, the moral testing and education of a good man, would then collapse, and the philosophical tragedy that Cozzens has tried to write would have to be recast in a satiric if not a downright farcical mode. Here as elsewhere, the author is guilty of the unforgivable novelistic sin: he is unaware of the real nature of his characters, that is, the words and actions he gives them lead the reader to other conclusions than those intended by the author.

His characters often speak brutally, for

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example, not because they are supposed to be brutes, but because their creator apparently thinks this is the way men talk. An elderly lawyer, civilly asked by a client to make some changes in the investing of her trust fund, replies: "You're getting senile, Maud. Try not to be more of a fool than you can help." A doctor, presented as a gentleman, meets the wife of a friend at a party, and, no dialogue or motivation given before, opens up: "What's your trouble, baby? Or can I guess? . . . Tell Pappy how many periods you've missed. . . . You know as well as I do you're one of those girls who only has to look at him to get herself knocked up." She leaves the room "indignantly" (the adverb implies she's a mite touchy) and he turns to Clarissa, Winner's wife:

"I knew it as soon as I looked at her. Sure. One night she thinks: Too much trouble to get up; the hell with it! You two ought to trade apparatus. Then everybody'd be happy."

Clarissa said: "Reg, you're not being very funny—"

"That's right. I don't feel very funny. Sometimes you get your bellyful of women—their goddam notions; their goddam talk-talk-talk; their goddam sacks of tripes!"

No reason is given for any of these onslaughts, aside from the fact that all three recipients are women; this seems to be Cozzens' idea of manly straight-from-the-shoulder talk. Curious. Curious, too, Winner's pooh-poohing attitude when he is appealed to by the feminine victims.

For Winner, too, is something of a brute, without his creator suspecting it. There is, for example, that odd business on page 428 when Mrs. Pratt, after her silly, hysterical religiosity has beaten vainly for some thirty pages against the rock of Winner's Episcopalian rectitude (Mrs. Pratt is a Roman Catholic), is finally checkmated. She has to go to the bathroom. For reasons obscure to me, this is presented as the decisive proof of hypocrisy: "At fact's surely unkindest prank of all, Arthur Winner must protest, generously indignant." ("Meanly delighted" would be more accurate.) For a page, Winner ruminates on his antagonist's discomfiture, concluding: "But how in the world of fancy did you put delightfully the human circumstance whose undressed substance was that Celia, Celia, Celia shits—or even that Mrs. Pratt most urgently requires to piss?" Methinks the gentleman doth protest too much, and methinks that Swift's allusion to Celia's necessity was positively healthy compared to Cozzens-Winner's resort to scatology to win an argument.

This leads us, in a way, to sex. The crucial episode, the one that more than any other shakes Winner's faith in himself and in the uprightness of his life, is something that happened years before the action begins and that keeps coming back into his mind: his affair with Marjorie, the wife of his close friend and law partner, Julius Penrose. On the day after his first wife's death, Marjorie—another silly, hysterical woman—comes to the house and in a rush of emotion offers herself to him. He is about to take her, on his wife's bed, when the phone rings. That time he is literally saved by the bell, but later, one summer when Penrose is away, they do have a frantic affair. At no time is love or even lust involved: "Far from coveting his neighbor's wife, he rather disliked her, found her more unattractive than not." The only reason given for Winner's reaction to Marjorie is that she was there. Like that mountain climber. Or as Marjorie's remorselessly philosophical husband puts it in his pidgin (or shall we say turkey) English: "I venture to assert that when the gadfly's sting is fairly driven in, when this indefeasible urge of the flesh presses them, few men of normal potency prove able to refrain their feet from that path." But then (a) why hasn't Winner had dozens of such affairs instead of only this one—and for that matter, why was Marjorie able to seduce him only that one summer?; and (b) granted that some men do indeed so behave, why Winner? Does an Episcopalian lawyer, a rational, decent family man with no more and no different sexual urges than the normal ones, act like a dead-end kid? Cozzens insists that the best of us do so behave, but if we do, then we aren't the best. There might be some individual quirk in Winner to explain it, but it is not given; on the contrary, Cozzens' point is precisely Winner's lack of such quirks—"few men of normal potency prove able to refrain their feet from that path." This is neither realistic nor imaginative. It is the shocked revulsion of the adolescent who discovers that papa and mama do it.

The formula for a best-seller now includes

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a minimum of "outspoken" descriptions of sexual activities, and *By Love Possessed* doesn't skimp here. Its inventory includes rape, seduction, marital and extra-marital intercourse, with touches of sadism, lesbianism, onanism, and homosexuality. *By Sex Possessed* would be a more accurate title. There is very little love, which the author presents as at best a confusing and chancey business, to be patiently endured, like the weather. The provincials, for some reason, get the point here much better than their urban leaders did. The Chattanooga *Times* wonderfully summed up the theme as "the situation of rational man beset by passion," adding: "Cozzens regards each form of love as a threat to Arthur Winner's power to reason, to his ability to live life with meaning." It's too bad this acuteness in diagnosis was not accompanied by equal skill in evaluation; Cozzens' notion of love was accepted as valid; but it isn't, since love, even passion, is not an extraneous monkey wrench thrown into the machinery of life, but rather a prime mover which may burst everything apart but which must function if there is to be any motion at all. This is, at any rate, how the makers of our literature, from Homer to Tolstoy, Proust, and James, have treated the theme; Cozzens' efficiency-expert approach (Gumming Up the Works) is echt-American but creatively impoverishing.

"The readers didn't go much for Cozzens," observed the Detroit *Times,* "until he wrote something with some sex in it." This cynicism is not wholly justified. The literary prestige conferred by the reviewers was, I think, the chief factor. One of the consumer's goods to which every American feels he has a right in this age of plenty is Culture, and *By Love Possessed* on the living-room table is a symbol of the owner's exercise of this right. Granted that the reviews may have led many proprietors of living-room tables to think they could combine business with pleasure, so to speak, word must have gotten around fairly soon that the sexual passages were unrewarding.

For even the sex is meager—perhaps the real title should be *By Reason Possessed.* I have the impression that Cozzens is as suspicious of sex as of love. Most of the sexual encounters he conscientiously describes are either fatuous (Winner and his first bride), sordid (Ralph and Veronica), or disgusting (Winner and Marjorie). Far worse—from a sales viewpoint—they are written in his customary turgid and inexpressive style. Take for example the two pages (264-65) on Winner's love-making with his second wife, the most concrete description of the sexual act in the book and also the only place where sex is presented as one might say positively. This passage sounds partly like a tongue-tied Dr. Johnson: "the disposings of accustomed practice, the preparations of purpose and consent, the familiar mute motions of furtherance." But mostly like a *Fortune* description of an industrial process: "thrilling thuds of his heart . . . moist manipulative reception . . . the mutual heat of pumped bloods . . . the thoroughgoing, deepening, widening work of their connection; and his then no less than hers, the tempo slowed in concert to engineer a tremulous joint containment and continuance . . . the deep muscle groups, come to their vertex, were in a flash convulsed."*

THE reviewers think of Cozzens, as he does himself, as a cool, logical, unsentimental, and implacably deep thinker. "Every character and event is bathed in the glow of a reflective intelligence," puffs *Time,* while Brendan Gill huffs: "The Cozzens intellect, which is of exceptional breadth and toughness, coolly directs the Cozzens heart." In reality, Cozzens is not so much cool as inhibited, not so much unsentimental as frightened by feeling; he is not logical at all, and his mind is shallow and muddy rather than clear and deep. I think Julius Penrose may fairly be taken as Cozzens' beau ideal of an intellectual, as Winner is his notion of a good man. If Penrose is meant to be taken ironically, if his pompous philosophizings are supposed to be burlesques, then the novel collapses at its center—leaving aside the fact they would be tedious as parodies—since it is Penrose who throughout the book guides Winner toward the solution of his problems. There's a Penrose in Homer, but he's not confused with Ulysses. His name is Nestor.

The reviewers, of course, were impressed by this club bore: "a dark, supernal intelli-

*"The passages having to do with physical love have a surprising lyric power."—Jessamyn West in the N.Y. *Herald Tribune.*

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gence" (Balliett), "one of the most compelling [what *does* that critical standby mean, I wonder] and memorable figures in recent writing" (Jessamyn West), "the scalded mind of the archskeptic . . . a corrosive nonstop monologuist with a tongue like a poisoned dart" (*Time*). The intellectual climax—more accurately, anti-climax—of the book is a thirty-page conversation between Penrose and Winner—at their club, appropriately enough—about life and love. It reminds me of two grunt-and-groan wrestlers heaving their ponderous bulks around without ever getting a grip on each other. "How could she like these things [sadistic acts by her first husband]?" Penrose rhetorically asks at one point, immediately continuing in the strange patois of Cozzensville: "My considered answer: Marjorie, though all unknowing, could! She could see such a punishment as condign. She had to submit, because in an anguished way, she craved to have done to her what she was persuaded she deserved to have done to her." Having got off this bit of kindergarten Freudianism: "He gazed an instant at Arthur Winner. 'You find this farfetched?' he said. 'Yes, we who are so normal are reluctant to entertain such ideas.'" Ideas are always entertained in Cozzensville, though they are not always entertaining. After fifteen more lines of elaboration, Penrose again fears he has outstripped his audience: "You consider this too complicated?" To which Winner, manfully: "Perhaps not. But I've often wondered how far anyone can see into what goes on in someone else. I've read somewhere that it would pose the acutest head to draw forth and discover what is lodged in the heart." Now where could he have read *that?*

It is interesting to note that Penrose and Winner, the two "point-of-view" characters, are lawyers, and that the processes of the law occupy a considerable amount of the book. The reviewers marvel that Cozzens has been able to master so much legal know-how, but I think there is more to it than that. We Americans have always had a weakness for the law. Its objectivity reassures our skittish dread of emotion and its emphasis on The Facts suits our pragmatic temper. But above all the law is our substitute for philosophy, which makes us almost as nervous as emotion does. Its complicated, precise formulae have the external qualities of theoretical thinking, lacking only the most essential one—they don't illuminate reality, since what is "given" is not the conditions of life but merely a narrow convention. Dickens, Tolstoy, and other novelists have written law-court scenes showing that truth is too small a fish to be caught in the law's coarse meshes. But to Cozzens a trial is reality while emotional, disorderly life is the illusion. He delights in the tedious complications of lawyer's talk, the sort of thing one skips in reading the court record of even the most sensational trials. On page 344 a clergyman incautiously asks Winner about the property rights of churches in Pennsylvania. "The difference is technical," Winner begins with gusto, and three pages later is still expatiating.

This fascination with the law is perhaps a clue to Cozzens' defects as a novelist. It explains the peculiar aridity of his prose, its needless qualifications, its clumsiness, its defensive qualifications (a lawyer qualifies negatively—so he can't be caught out later; but a novelist qualifies positively—to make his meaning not safer but clearer). And his sensibility is lawyer-like in its lack of both form and feeling, its peculiar combination of a brutal domineering pragmatism ("Just stick to the facts, please!") with abstract fancywork, a kind of Victorian jigsaw decoration that hides more than it reveals. I, too, think the law is interesting, but as an intellectual discipline, like mathematics or crossword puzzles. I feel Cozzens uses it as a defense against emotion ("sentimentality"). Confusing it with philosophy, he makes it bear too heavy a load, so that reality is distorted and even the law's own qualities are destroyed, its logic and precision blurred, its technical elegance coarsened. There's too much emotion in his law and too much law in his emotion.

THE three earlier Cozzens novels I've read, *The Last Adam, The Just and the Unjust,* and *Guard of Honor,* were written in a straightforward if commonplace style. But here Cozzens has tried to write Literature, to develop a complicated individual style, to convey deeper meanings than he has up to now attempted. Slimly endowed as either thinker or stylist, he has succeeded only in fuzzing it up, inverting the syntax, dragging

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in Latin-root polysyllables. Stylistically, *By Love Possessed* is a neo-Victorian cakewalk.* A cakewalk by a singularly awkward contestant. Confusing laboriousness with profundity, the reviewers have for the most part not detected the imposture.

There is some evidence, if one reads closely and also between the lines, that some of the reviewers had their doubts. But they adopted various strategies for muffling them. Messrs. Gill, Fischer, and Balliett, while applauding the style in general, refrained from quoting anything. The last-named, after praising the "compact, baked, fastidious sentences" went into a long, worried paragraph which inferred the opposite. "The unbending intricacies of thought . . . seem to send his sentences into impossible log-jams," he wrote, which is like saying of a girl, "She doesn't seem pretty." Jessamyn West warned, "You may come away with a certain feeling of tiredness," and left it at that. Malcolm Cowley managed to imply the book is a masterpiece without actually saying so—the publishers couldn't extract a single quote. With that cooniness he used to deploy in the 30's when he was confronted with an important work that was on the right (that is, the "left") side but was pretty terrible, Cowley, here also confronted with a conflict between his taste and his sense of the *Zeitgeist,* managed to praise with faint damns. One magisterial sentence, in particular, may be recommended to all ambitious young book reviewers: "His style used to be as clear as a mountain brook; now it has become a little weed-grown and murky, like the brook when it wanders through a meadow." A meadowy brook is pretty *too* —it shows the mature Cozzens now feels, in Cowley's words, that "life is more complicated than he once believed."

A favorite reviewer's gambit was that Cozzens' prose may be involved but so is James's. "One drawback is the style," *Time* admitted, "which is frosted with parenthetical clauses, humpbacked syntax, Jamesian involutions, Faulknerian meanderings." I am myself no foe of the parenthesis, nor do I mind a little syntactical humping at times, but I feel this comparison is absurd. James's involutions are (a) necessary to precisely discriminate his meaning; (b) solid parts of the architecture of the sentence; and (c) controlled by a fine ear for euphony. Faulkner does meander, but there is emotional force, descriptive richness behind his wanderings. They both use words that are not only in the dictionary but also in the living language, and use them in conversational rhythms. Their style is complex because they are saying something complicated, not, as with Cozzens, because they cannot make words do what they want them to do.

But the main burden of the reviewers was not doubt but affirmation. In reading their praise of Cozzens' prose, I had an uneasy feeling that perhaps we were working with different texts.

"*Every sentence has been hammered, filed and tested until it bears precisely the weight it was designed to carry, and does it with clarity and grace,*" wrote John Fischer. The sentences have been hammered all right:

> Recollected with detachment, these self-contrived quandaries, these piffling dilemmas that young love could invent for itself were comic —too much ado about nothing much! Arthur Winner Junior was entangled laughably in his still-juvenile illogicalities and inconsistencies. Absurdly set on working contradictories and incompatibles, he showed how the world was indeed a comedy for those who think. By his unripe, all-or-nothing-at-all views, he was bound to be self-confounded. By the ridiculous impracticalness of his aspirations, he was inescapably that figure of fun whose lofty professions go with quite other performances. The high endeavor's very moments of true predominance guaranteed the little joke-on-them to follow.

This is not a Horrible Example—we shall have some later—but a typical, run-of-the-mill Cozzens paragraph, chosen at random. It seems to me about as bad as prose can get —what sensitive or even merely competent novelist would write a phrase like "the ridiculous impracticalness of his aspirations"?

"*Mr. Cozzens is a master of dialogue,*" wrote Orville Prescott. On the contrary, he has no ear for speech at all. "You answer well, Arthur!" says one matron. "But, to my very point!" And another: "They're all, or almost all, down at the boathouse, swim-

*"CAKEWALK—a form of entertainment among American Negroes in which a prize of a cake was given for the most accomplished steps and figures."—WEBSTER.

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ming, Arthur." A practicing lawyer, not supposed to be either pompous or balmy, uses the following expressions during a chat: "I merit the reproof no doubt. . . . My unbecoming boasting you must lay to my sad disability. . . . I'm now in a fettle fine. . . . Our colloquy was brief." In short, Cozzens' people tend to talk like Cozzens. They're out for that cake, too.

*"He has always written with complete clarity,"* wrote Granville Hicks, *"but here, without forsaking clarity and correctness, he achieves great eloquence and even poetic power."* On the contrary, malphony exfoliates, as our author might put it. As:

> The succussive, earthquake-like throwing-over of a counted-on years-old stable state of things had opened fissures. Through one of them, Arthur Winner stared a giddying, horrifying moment down unplumbed, nameless abysses in himself. He might later deny the cognition, put thoughts of the undiscovered country away, seek to lose the memory; yet the heart's mute halt at every occasional, accidental recollection of those gulfs admitted their existence, confessed his fearful close shave.

"Succussive" is cake-walking, since it means "violently shaking . . . as of earthquakes" and so merely duplicates the next word; a good writer wouldn't use four hyphenated expressions in a row; he would also avoid the "occasional, accidental" rhyme, and the reference to unplumbed abysses; he would ask himself what a mute halt is (as versus a noisy halt?); and he would sense that "close shave" is stylistically an anticlimax to so solemnly elevated a passage. It's all very puzzling. Here's Richard Ellmann of Northwestern University, who has been perceptive about Joyce's prose, finding *By Love Possessed* "so pleasant to read," while I find almost every sentence grates.*

*As: "Thinking last night of Ralph's 'Joanie,' those Moores, all unsuspecting; whose 'shame' or 'disgrace' of the same kind (if more decent in degree) stood accomplished, waiting merely to be discovered to them, Arthur Winner had felt able to pre-figure, following the first horrified anger, the distraught recriminations, the general fury of family woe, a bitter necessary acceptance." I find such prose almost impossible to read, partly because of an inexpressive, clumsy use of words, partly because the thought is both abstract and unclear, but chiefly because the rhythms are all wrong. Instead of carrying one forward, they drop one flat, and one must begin anew with each phrase. An artist creates a world, bit added to bit; each addition of Cozzens destroys what has gone before.

*"Its author has become the most technically accomplished American novelist alive,"* wrote Whitney Balliett. Let us say rather: the least technically accomplished. To list a few defects of style:

(1) *Melodramatics.* "Deaf as yesterday to all representations of right, he purposed further perfidy, once more pawning his honor to obtain his lust. Deaf as yesterday to all remonstrances of reason, he purposed to sell himself over again to buy venery's disappearing dross." (Haven't seen "dross" in print since *East Lynne.*)

(2) *Confucius Say.* A queer strangled sententiousness often seizes upon our author. "In real life, effects of such disappointment are observed to be unenduring." "The resolve to rise permitted no intermissions; ambition was never sated." Like shot in game or sand in clams, such gritty nuggets are strewn through the book to set on edge the teeth of the reader—though not, apparently, of the reviewer.

(3) *Pointless Inversion.* As Wolcott Gibbs once wrote of *Time:* "Backward ran sentences till reeled the mind." Examples: "Unintelligible to them would be the law." "Owned and operated by Noah's father was a busy grist mill." "Behind these slowminded peerings of sullen anxiety did dumb unreasonable surges of love swell." "For that night, untied Hope still her virgin knot will keep." The last is interesting. He must mean "tied," since the "still" implies a possible later change, and a virgin knot, once untied, must ever remain so. I think the "un-" was added automatically, because Cozzens makes a dead style even deader by an obsessive use of negative constructions, often doubled, as: "unkilled," "unhasty," "not-unhelped," "not-uneducated," "not-unmoving," "a not-unsturdy frame," "a not-unhandsome profile." May we take it the profile is handsome, the frame sturdy, or do they exist in some limbo betwixt and between?

(4) *Toujours le Mot Injuste.* If there's an inexpressive word, Cozzens will find it. He specially favors: (a) five-dollar words where five-centers would do; (b) pedantic Latinisms, strange beasts that are usually kept behind the zoo bars of Webster's Unabridged.

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(a) Multisonous, incommutable, phantasmogenesis (having to do with the origin of dreams), stupefacients (narcotics), encasement ("snug encasement of his neck" for "tight collar"), explicative ("one of his characteristically explicative observations"), solemnization ("wedding" becomes "the solemnization's scene"), eventuated ("acts of eventuated guilt," a phrase undecipherable even with the Unabridged), and condign ("condign punishment"—means "deserved p.").

(b) I must admit that reading Cozzens has enriched my vocabulary, or, more accurately, added to it. My favorite, on the whole, is "presbyopic," which of course means "long-sighted because of old age." I also like the sound of "viridity" and "mucid," though it's disappointing to learn they mean simply "greenness" and "slimy." But I see no reason for such grotesques as qualmish, scrutinous, vulnerary ("wound-healing"), pudency, revulsively, and vellications, which is Latin for twitchings.

Perhaps the supreme triumph of Late Cozzenesque occurs on page 128, where, agonizedly entoiled in the entracement of a bridegroom's mazed tergiversations, as our author might put it, he manages twice to use the phrase "piacular pollution." The second time is specially impressive: "That concept of piacular pollution, much diminished as the idea of undressing Hope was entertained, received, with the autoptic fact of the undressed Hope, its *coup de grace*." "Autoptic" is simple—an adjective made from "autopsy" or "personal inspection." "Piacular" is more complicated. It means either (a) "of the nature of an expiation; expiatory," or (b) "requiring expiation." If it's (a), then the pollution is an expiation, an atonement for some sin, which is absurd since the pollution itself is a sin; but if it's (b), we are presented, by inference, with the interesting notion of a pollution that does not require expiation, that is, a so-to-speak pure pollution.

Cozzens' style is a throwback to the palmiest days of 19th-century rhetoric, when a big Latin-root word was considered more elegant than a small Anglo-Saxon word. The long, patient uphill struggle of the last fifty years to bring the diction and rhythms of prose closer to those of the spoken language might never have existed so far as Cozzens is concerned. He doesn't even revert to the *central* tradition (Scott, Cooper, Bulwer-Lytton) but rather to the eccentric mode of the half-rebels against it (Carlyle, Meredith), who broke up the orderly platoons of gold-laced Latinisms into whimsically arranged squads, uniformed with equal artificiality but marching every which way as the author's wayward spirit moved them. Carlyle and Meredith are even less readable today than Scott and Cooper, whose prose at least inherited from the 18th century some structural backbone.

That a contemporary writer should spend eight years fabricating a pastiche in the manner of George Meredith could only happen in America, where isolation produces oddity. The American novelist is sustained and disciplined by neither a literary tradition nor an intellectual community. He doesn't see other writers much; he probably doesn't live in New York, which like Paris and London unfortunately has almost a monopoly of the national cultural life, because the pace is too fast, the daily life too ugly, the interruptions too great; and even if he does, there are no cafés or pubs where he can foregather with his colleagues; he doesn't read the literary press, which anyway is much less developed than in London or Paris; he normally thinks of himself as a non-intellectual, even an anti-intellectual (Faulkner, Hemingway, Fitzgerald, Lewis, Anderson). It is a pattern of cultural isolation that brings out a writer's eccentric, even his grotesque side.

In the case of Cozzens, things have gone about as far as they can. At his country place in Lambertville, New Jersey, he leads a life compared to which Thoreau's on Walden Pond was gregarious. "I am a hermit and I have no friends," he understates. According to *Time*, "Years elapse between dinner guests" and he hasn't been to a play, a concert, or an art gallery in twenty years. (He did go to a movie in 1940). To those who wonder how he can write novels when he has so little contact with people, he says: "The thing you have to know about is yourself; you are people." But he seems signally lacking in self-knowledge. He fancies himself as a stylist, for instance. "My own literary preferences are for writers who write well," he says, pleas-

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antly adding: "This necessarily excludes most of my contemporaries." The level of his taste may be inferred from the fact that he sneers at Faulkner ("falsifies life for dramatic effect"), Hemingway ("under the rough exterior, he's just a great big bleeding heart"), and Lewis ("a crypto-sentimentalist"), but admires—W. Somerset Maugham.

He is similarly deceived about himself. He thinks he is a true-blue conservative of the old school: "I am more or less illiberal and strongly antipathetic to all political and social movements. I was brought up an Episcopalian, and where I live, the landed gentry are Republican." He is proud of his Tory ancestors, who had to flee to Canada during the Revolution: "To tell the truth, I feel I'm better than other people." But this statement itself seems to me not that of an aristocrat, who would take it for granted, but rather of an uneasy *arriviste*. Nor does illiberalism make a conservative, as we learned in the days of McCarthy. Cozzens, like some of his sympathetically intended heroes—Dr. Bull in *The Last Adam* is an example—goes in for Plain Speaking, but it comes out somehow a little bumptious and unpleasant: "I like anybody if he's a nice guy, but I've never met many Negroes who were nice guys." His notion of a nice-guy Negro is Alfred Revere in *By Love Possessed*, the colored verger of the local Episcopalian church, which is otherwise Whites Only. Tactfully, Mr. Revere always takes Communion last: "The good, the just man had consideration for others. By delaying he took care that members of the congregation need never hesitate to receive the blood of our Lord Jesus Christ because a cup from which a Negro had drunk contained it." This is not ironical, it is perfectly serious, and is followed by a page of contorted dialectic about God's love.

Years ago Cozzens married Bernice Baumgarten, a well-known literary agent. Although apparently it is a successful marriage, his remarks to the press about it have been rather boorish, even for him: "I suppose sex entered into it. After all, what's a woman for? . . . Mother almost died when I married a Jew, but later when she saw I was being decently cared for, she realized that it was the best thing that could have happened to me." Up to *By Love Possessed*, Cozzens was largely supported by his wife. "It could have been a humiliating situation, but I guess I had a certain native conceit [those Tory ancestors] and felt that her time was well spent," he says with his usual delicacy. Perhaps Cozzens is as inept with the spoken as with the written word. Probably he didn't mean to define quite so narrowly and explicitly his wife's role in his life, just as probably the slick, pushing, crafty Jewish lawyer, Mr. Woolf—he has even had the nerve to turn Episcopalian, to Winner's contemptuous amusement—is not meant to stand for Jews in general, any more than the odious Mrs. Pratt is meant to stand for all Catholics. One only wishes that Cozzens' mouthpiece weren't quite so explicit: "Glimpsing Mr. Woolf's face in the mirror again, Arthur Winner could see his lips form a smile, deprecatory, intentionally ingratiating. Was something there of the patient shrug, something of the bated breath and whispering humbleness? . . . Did you forget at your peril the ancient grudge that might be fed if Mr. Woolf could catch you once upon the hip?"

How did it happen? Why did such a book impress the reviewers? We know whodunit, but what was the motive? Like other crimes, this one was a product of Conditions. The failure of literary judgment and of simple common sense shown in *l'affaire Cozzens* indicates a general lowering of standards. If this were all, if our reviewers just didn't know any better, then one would have to conclude we had quite lost our bearings. Luckily, there were other factors. It is disturbing it could have happened at all: *By Love Possessed* is the Sputnik-Vanguard of the literary world. But there were also specific reasons for the reviewers' misjudgment, some of them also rather disturbing but at least limited in their implications.

The two most important, I think, were related: a general feeling that Cozzens had hitherto been neglected and that he "had it coming to him." And consequently a willingness, indeed an eagerness to take at face value his novel's pretensions. It is difficult for American reviewers to resist a long, ambitious novel; they are betrayed by the American admiration of size and scope, also by the American sense of good fellowship; they find it hard to say to the author,

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after all his work: "Sorry, but it's terrible." In Cozzens' case, it would have been especially hard because he had been writing serious novels for thirty years without ever having had a major success, either popular or *d'estime*. It was now or never. The second alternative would have meant that a lifetime of hard work in a good cause had ended in failure, which would have been un-American. So it had to be now.

The other factor in the book's success is historical. It is the latest episode in The Middlebrow Counter-Revolution. In the 20's and 30's, the avant-garde intellectuals had it pretty much their way. In 1940, the counter-revolution was launched with Archibald MacLeish's essay, "The Irresponsibles," and Van Wyck Brooks's Hunter College talk, "On Literature Today," followed a year later by his "Primary Literature and Coterie Literature." The Brooks-MacLeish thesis was that the avant-garde had lost contact with the normal life of humanity and had become frozen in an attitude of destructive superiority; the moral consequences were perversity and snobbishness, the cultural consequences were negativism, eccentricity, and solipsism.* The thesis was launched at the right moment. By 1940 the avant-garde had run out of gas —unfortunately no rear-guard filling stations have been opened up, either—while the country had become engaged in a world struggle for survival that made any radically dissident, skeptical attitude a luxury. Both conditions still persist, and so the counter-revolution has been on ever since.

Perhaps the first to see Cozzens as a rallying point was the late Bernard De Voto, who had a wonderfully acute instinct in these matters. De Voto was Cozzens' Ezra Pound. "He is not a literary man, he is a writer," he observed, a little obscurely but I see what he means. "There are a handful like him in every age. Later on it turns out they were the ones who wrote that age's literature." The wheel has comically come full circle: it used to be those odd, isolated, brilliant writers who were *in advance* of their times—the Stendhals, the Melvilles, the Joyces, and Rimbauds—who later on were discovered to be "the ones who wrote that age's literature"; but now it is the sober, conscientious plodders, who have a hard time just keeping up with the procession, whose true worth is temporarily obscured by their modish avant-garde competitors. This note is struck by the reviewers of *By Love Possessed*. "Critics and the kind of readers who start fashionable cults have been markedly cool toward him," writes Gill, while John Fischer complains that Cozzens, unlike "some other novelists of stature," has hitherto been denied "the reverence—indeed the adulation—of the magisterial critics whose encyclicals appear in the literary quarterlies and academic journals. Aside from a Pulitzer Prize in 1949, no such laurels have lighted on Cozzens' head, and the fashionable critics have passed him by in contemptuous silence."

A highbrow conspiracy of paranoiac dimensions, it seems, is behind it all. Cozzens just won't play our game. "It may be that his refusal to become a public figure—no TV or P.E.N. appearances, no commencement addresses at Sarah Lawrence, no night-club pronouncements recorded by Leonard Lyons—has put them [us] off. By devoting himself to writing, he has made himself invisible to the world of letters." So, Mr. Gill.

And Mr. Fischer: "Even his private life is, for a writer, unconventional. He attends no cocktail parties, makes no speeches, signs no manifestoes, writes no reviews, appears on no television shows, scratches no backs, shuns women's clubs .... Few people in the so-called literary world have ever set eyes on him." But doesn't all this precisely describe Faulkner and Hemingway when they were making their reputations? Is the P.E.N. Club—have I ever met a member? —so powerful? Did Fitzgerald sign any manifestoes? Are we highbrows really so impressed by TV appearances, talks be-

*Brooks and MacLeish assumed it was good for writers to identify themselves with their society, which in turn assumed the society was good. If it wasn't, then the avant-garde was justified in isolating itself. Empirically, this would seem to be the case—at least most of the memorable art in every field produced between about 1890 and 1930 was done by artists like Joyce, Eliot, Picasso, Stravinsky, and others who had rejected bourgeois society. But there's no space to argue the question here. Those interested might look at my "Kulturbolshewismus—the Brooks-MacLeish Thesis" in *Partisan Review*, November-December 1941, reprinted in *Memoirs of a Revolutionist* (1957).

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fore women's clubs, mention in gossip columns? Could it be simply that Cozzens really isn't very good?

Another hypothesis was advanced by *Time*: "The interior decorators of U.S letters—the little-magazine critics whose favorite furniture is the pigeonhole—find that Cozzens fits no recent fictional compartments, and usually pretend that he does not exist." But there is, in fact, a recent pigeonhole for Cozzens: the Novel of Resignation. *By Love Possessed* is, philosophically, an inversion, almost a parody of a kind of story Tolstoy and other 19th-century Russian novelists used to tell: of a successful, self-satisfied hero who is led by experiences in "extreme situations" to see how artificial his life has been and who then rejects the conventional world and either dies or begins a new, more meaningful life. In the Novel of Resignation, the highest reach of enlightenment is to realize how awful the System is and yet to accept it *on its own terms*. Because otherwise there wouldn't be any System. Marquand invented the genre, Sloan Wilson carried it on in *The Man in the Grey Flannel Suit,* and Herman Wouk formulated it most unmistakably in *The Caine Mutiny*. Wouk's moral is that it is better to obey a lunatic, cowardly Captain Queeg, even if the result is disaster, than to follow the sensible advice of an officer of lower grade (who is pictured as a smooth-talking, destructive, cynical, irresponsible conniver —in short, an intellectual) and save the ship. Because otherwise there wouldn't be any U.S. navy. In short, the conventional world, the System, is confused with Life. And since Life is Like That, it is childish if not worse to insist on something better. This is typically American: either juvenile revolt or the immature acceptance of everything; there is no modulation, no development, merely the blank confrontation of untenable extremes; "maturity" means simply to replace wholesale revolt with wholesale acceptance.

It is as if Tolstoy's *The Death of Ivan Ilyitch* ended with the hero, after his atrocious sufferings, concluding that, as a high official of the Court of Justice, it was in the nature of things that he should die horribly of cancer, and that he must therefore bear his torment like a man for the good of the service. On the contrary, he is driven by his "extreme situation" to reject his whole past way of life. Only when he is finally able to give up "the claim that his life had been good" can he experience anything significant: love—the young servant's gentle care of him—and then death.

The ending of *By Love Possessed* strikes rather a different note. From Winner's climactic six-page interior monologue that ends the book we can take three formulations that sum it up: (1) "Freedom is the knowledge of necessity." (2) "We are not children. In this life we cannot have everything for ourselves we might like to have." (3) "Victory is not in reaching certainties or solving mysteries; victory is in making do with uncertainties, in supporting mysteries."

But what is the reality behind these unexceptionable bits of philosophy? It is that Winner, for complicated pragmatic-sentimental reasons, decides to cover up an embezzlement he has just discovered, an embezzlement of trust funds by his venerable law partner, Noah Tuttle, and that he has been eased of his guilt toward his other partner, Julius Penrose, about his old affair with Marjorie, Penrose's wife. In both cases, it is Penrose who gives him the line: exposing Tuttle would not only ruin Winner—who would be equally responsible for his partner's defalcations—but would also mean the disgrace of Tuttle, who is after all paying the money back slowly. As for Winner's liaison with Marjorie, Penrose has known about it all along and has never blamed Winner, considering that "indefeasible urge of the flesh." In fact, Penrose is actually obliged to Winner for *not* telling him: "I've always thanked you for . . . trying in every way to keep it from me."

In short, Ivan Ilyitch feels free because he is compelled to reject his past as "not the right thing," Arthur Winner because he is allowed to accept his past, is even thanked by his best friend for having concealed from him the fact that he had cuckolded him. The last words of the book are Winner's, as he returns home: "I'm here." It's all right, nothing has to be changed: "I have the strength, the strength to, to—to endure more miseries," thinks Winner, gratefully.

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# KING HEROD AS ORIENTAL MONARCH

## *Ancient History and the Modern British Mind*

**MARTIN BRAUN**

IF I may adapt a familiar saying, the slogan "We are all realists now" seems to me to sum up fairly well the present-day position in historical and political thinking. What marks current realism, whether it be Dr. Reinhold Niebuhr's Christian realism or Professor Isaiah Berlin's realism of common sense, is a deep-seated distrust and dislike of the doctrinaire in politics. Intoxicated by his utopian fancies and caught in the meshes of his own making, the doctrinaire, and especially the doctrinaire idealist, stands forth as the begetter of anarchy or despotism. Correspondingly, the prestige of the realist in politics has gone up by leaps and bounds—that is, the prestige of the "know-how" man who practices politics as the art of the possible. A case in point is the rapid recovery by Bismarck of ground lost in the West during the two world wars. This trend has not stopped short at ancient history.

Before the last war, John Buchan already expressed the new mood when he hailed Augustus in these terms: "I seemed to find in his work a profound practical intelligence which is even rarer in history than a seminal idealism." The reputation of the "master designer" who ended the Roman revolution shines today brighter than ever, while the Gracchi, who started the whole trouble with their untimely reforms, have been put in the dock as irresponsible idealists infatuated with ill-digested Greek notions and theories. Maybe one of these days we shall be given a revaluation of Sulla in which his cruelty will appear balanced or even outweighed by his many good points as a political realist.

There is much food for thought in this connection in a recent book, *The Life and Times of Herod the Great,* by Stewart Perowne.* For Herod (d. 4 B.C.E.) was a sort of Palestinian Sulla, in that he restored and kept order among the Jews for some thirty years through a regime of stick-and-carrot. An expert at *Realpolitik,* he combined the role of conquering adventurer with that of time-serving diplomatist, of Sulla-Bonaparte with that of Talleyrand. Besides, there is to his credit a massive achievement as administrator and builder, as colonizer and protector of frontiers, as promoter of trade and international intercourse. Since the scales today are in any case heavily weighted against his Jewish subjects—the Gibbonian tradition that Judaism is a virulent form of religious exclusiveness having been reinforced or replaced of late by the Toynbeean charge of national fanaticism—Herod is in a position now to cut a pretty fine figure. For has not nationalism come to be regarded as the arch-heresy of mankind? And in an age that puts a premium on administrative efficiency and material welfare, when the dread of anarchy leads men to bow before

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THE disasters which befell Palestine under Roman rule at the time of Herod's kingship have recently furnished the subject of a historical biography, written by a former official of the British Mandatory government in Palestine. The validity of this imaginative reconstruction of Herod's career is here critically examined by a historian, MARTIN BRAUN, who concludes that the traditional Jewish view of Herod is the correct one. Mr. Braun, born in Germany, is now a British citizen and currently teaches at Oxford. He is the author of *History and Romance in Graeco-Oriental Literature* (1938) and has in preparation *The Historiography of Josephus.* This is his first appearance in COMMENTARY.

*Hodder & Stoughton (London), 186 pp., 21s.



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any tough-minded autocrat, Herod will indeed seem to deserve his cognomen of "great."

Till recently English historians preserved a strict detachment toward Herod. They certainly did not feel inclined to idealize him, to soften the dark and criminal side of his character and career, and lift him up to a level of importance on a par with an Augustus. Mr. Perowne's new monograph marks a decided change. It is written with unconcealed partisanship and even affection for its subject, who, we are made to feel, fully lived up to his name "the Heroic." Not since Nicholas of Damascus, a Greek literatus who served faithfully as Herod's adviser, immortalized the deeds of his patron has any historian shown himself so openly and fervently in sympathy, nay, in league with a historical figure whose despotism remains a fact even when all possible allowances are made. Maybe future students of mid-20th-century Europe will consult this book less for information on Herod than for what it unwittingly reveals about its author and the intellectual climate of his society. Their quest would not be in vain.

For this is an intensely personal book. As it is intimately linked with a chapter in the author's own career, so it mirrors most faithfully his likes and dislikes—his position on the map of contemporary conflict. Mr. Perowne lived for many years as a British civil servant in mandated Palestine. His love for the Holy Land is as transparent as his intimate acquaintance with its landscape, peoples, and antiquities. This personal touch gives his book a great deal of immediacy and color. Less satisfactory is the slant he has put on the story as a whole. It, too, springs from the closeness of his relationship with present-day Palestine. There can be no doubt as to his emotional involvement in the Arab-Zionist conflict and his pro-Arab sympathies. In his final "Verdict" he lets the anti-Zionist cat out of the bag by referring to "the minority that still pursues the nationalist phantom." The Arab-Israeli conflict is projected into the past. Mr. Perowne depicts Herod as being essentially an Arab whose fate it was to wage a life-long struggle with the foolish and out-of-date nationalism of the Jews. While castigating in turn Pharisees and Sadducees for their nationalist obsession, he accords to his open-minded and shrewdly realistic "Arab" hero the role of standard-bearer of universal Western civilization.

Though the antagonism between Jewish nationalism and Western universalism is basic to Mr. Perowne's interpretation of the story, Herod's "Arab-ness" itself serves him as a convenient master key with which to unlock psychological problems. He visualizes Herod in his youth and early manhood as the "fascinating" and romantically "strange" Arab whose charm proves irresistible to men and women alike—among whom were such prominent contemporaries as Cleopatra, Cassius, Antony, Augustus, and Agrippa. He even treats his readers to an imaginary portrait of Herod as a glamorous youth "with the fine features of the Arab, the golden complexion, the thin, sensitive lips, the delicately-moulded nose, the small, crisp ears, the large, liquid, oval eye, shaded by fernlike lashes, beneath sable eye-brows." The aging Herod he has depicted as "an Arab monarch" whose solitary moods foreshadowed the attitude of "other Arabs who were to rule Palestine 700 years later." As well as his magnetism and grandeur of soul, his political shrewdness and realism are singled out as belonging to Herod's Arab inheritance, together with a genius for personal relations.

Mr. Perowne makes much of Herod's loyalty to his friends and benefactors. Yet sharing the spoils of victory in a civil war with one's camp-followers does not evince loyalty: it is an age-old device of political gangsterism. Or consider the callous execution of a helpless old man and benefactor like Hyrcanus, grandfather of Herod's wife Mariamne and ex-high priest of the Hasmonean dynasty, whom Herod had lured back from the safety of Babylonia.

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And how can the loyalty of "this Arab prince" be squared with the fact that he forsook Mark Antony, who had never failed him in his own dire need, as soon as Antony was defeated? But Mr. Perowne is not easily nonplussed. He invents "a romantic bond" between the two men, first forged more than twenty-five years earlier during the Gabinian campaign, when Antony was a dashing cavalry commander and Herod "a fascinating Eastern boy." And "it was Antony who had broken the chain that bound them"—because he had preferred to Herod's wisdom and friendship the poison of the "serpent of old Nile."

All Mr. Perowne's ado about Herod's "Arab-ness" strikes me as rather odd. It has, of course, not escaped notice that Herod was of Arab stock on his mother's side. (But even this has been questioned; an eminent Protestant scholar, Adolf Schlatter (1852-1938), held that Kypros, Herod's mother, came from a *Jewish* family resident in Arabia.) It is also common knowledge that Herod was an Idumaean and the son of an Idumaean. Consequently, to turn Herod into an Arab, one has to pass off the Idumaeans as Arabs. This is exactly what Mr. Perowne does. "The Edomites were Arabs," we read, and Herod's father, Antipater, is described as "an obscure Arab civil servant." (This is quite revealing, I think, of the subconscious tendency of the ex-civil servant turned biographer to picture the ancient world in his own image; his attribution to Antipater of an "almost northern temperament" adds further piquancy.)

And, striking a solemn note at the end of a chapter, he speaks of "the Children of Ishmael, the race from which Herod himself had sprung." To graft Israel's twin brother, Edom, on to the Ishmaelite family tree is an act of wish-fulfillment pure and simple. And we shall not be far from the truth if we suspect pan-Arab propaganda to be the source of inspiration for this novel assertion. And so from "cruel Idumaean," Herod is transformed into a "charming Arab."

Among the ingredients in the caldron from which Mr. Perowne has conjured up his vision of Herod as "Arab" vassal king are two inveterate English attitudes. One is Oriental romanticism (this despite Mr. Perowne's parade of realism), and the other is self-identification with the Roman Empire, as distinct from the Roman republic. Mr. Perowne is a spiritual descendant not only of Gibbon, but of Disraeli, Kipling, and T. E. Lawrence. Though Herod's conduct may go from bad to worse, the one feature that always redeems him in the author's eyes is his championship of empire and Western civilization.

It will already be apparent that Mr. Perowne has not written a historical work in the technical sense. The professional historian would deplore such a moralizing attitude to politics and religion, the imaginary pictures or glimpses of scenes and events, the subtle coloring of the evidence in favor of a "hero," and the undisguised animosity towards that "hero's" opponents. But where then does this book belong?

In telling the absorbing story of the Idumaean upstart who conquered a kingdom, won a Hasmonean princess, and lived unhappily ever after, Mr. Perowne competes with the Emil Ludwigs of our time rather than with the academic historian. It is all to the good that a man of Mr. Perowne's experience and taste should have tried his hand at novelized history, and the high praise some English literary critics have bestowed on him is fully deserved. And yet one feels tempted to exclaim with Professor Pieter Geyl: "*C'est magnifique mais ce n'est pas l'histoire.*" The book exhibits the typical defects of its virtues: over-dramatization and over-simplification. At his best as a straightforward storyteller, Mr. Perowne is at his weakest and most misleading when he attempts to reduce Jewish religious problems or developments and the intricacies of Palestinian party politics to their essentials. An all too easily swayed imagination, lack of uniformly high critical standards, and a rather haphazard scholarship that is solid at the archaeological cir-

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cumference and shaky at the politico-religious center, have combined to produce a book which stands in constant need of checking just because it makes such thrilling reading.

That Mr. Perowne describes the Septuagint as "published by Alexandria University" may perhaps seem a trivial blunder, but his assessment of Persia's impact on post-Exilic Jewish religion is surely a more serious matter. Persia's influence has usually been recognized in the field of apocalyptic, angelology, and demonology, but Mr. Perowne informs us that "From Persia had come the idea of the infinite, first deduced by Persian astronomers from the endless revolutions of the heavenly bodies: if they were perpetual, must not the spirit that made them be infinite? It followed that the soul of man, his creation, must be infinite, too." There is *no* foundation whatsoever for this assertion.

EQUALLY unfortunate are Mr. Perowne's exercises in Higher Criticism. He argues in favor of an apocryphal story preserved by the ecclesiastical historian Eusebius (*c.* 260-*c.* 339), alleging that Herod's father, Antipater, was in early childhood kidnapped by Idumaean brigands who brought him up as one of them when the child's father, a servant at the temple of Apollo in the Graeco-Palestinian town of Ascalon, was unable to pay the ransom. Yet, as Louis Ginzberg pointed out long ago, the tendentiousness of the story affords a clue to its fictitious character. By representing Herod as the grandson of an unclean Philistine and temple servant and as the son of a brigand, the Jews were revenging themselves on the Idumaean tyrant. It is rather intriguing to speculate on how Mr. Perowne can reconcile Antipater's and Herod's "Arab-ness" with their alleged Ascalon origin.

Mr. Perowne's critical faculty reaches its nadir when he treats as historical fact what is palpably nothing but a yarn spun by a certain Julius Marathus, an imperial freedman most probably of Oriental origin: namely that—to quote from Suetonius' *Life of Augustus*—"a few months before Augustus was born a portent was generally observed at Rome which gave warning that nature was pregnant with a king for the Roman people; thereupon the Senate in consternation decreed that no male child born that year should be reared." Evidently, it is the same type of legend as that which attached itself to the birth story of Jesus. Yet Mr. Perowne has seen fit to use this Augustus legend in support of his attempt to vindicate the *historicity* of the Gospel story of Herod's Massacre of the Innocents.

Instead of going on with this catalogue of *gaffes* and misconceptions, I prefer to give two or three examples of the author's cavalier attitude towards history as such. The year 63 B.C.E. he claims was "one of the most fateful in history." Why? Because it was the year "in which Cicero was Consul, in which both Augustus and Agrippa were born." It may be remarked in passing that Mr. Perowne's admiration for Augustus' right-hand man, Vipsanius Agrippa, is as unbounded as his disgust with most of the Hasmoneans. Even more extravagant is his evaluation of the one-year rule of Aristobulus (104-3 B.C.E.), which he characterizes as "the most fateful reign in the whole of recorded history" because this Hasmonean conquered Galilee and forcibly converted its inhabitants to Judaism, "thus ensuring that every child born of Galilean parents should henceforth be born into Jewry, including Jesus of Nazareth."

Parochial-minded in any case, this argument seems extraordinary even from a Christian point of view, for one would have thought that for a Christian *any* major event of Jewish history was equally "fateful" and indispensable in leading up to its consummation—the life and death of Jesus. And what are we think of a historian who in all seriousness can describe Jewish Palestine as being swifty overwhelmed in Pompey's time by a cultural "catastrophe"—the catastrophe of Hellenization? "Within ten years"—we are told—"Hellenism, the pagan Greek way of life and conduct, was to be

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predominant within the country." Here the historical scene has gotten so out of focus as to become wholly unrecognizable.

But do we, in the light of Mr. Perowne's new biography, have to revise our evaluation of Herod, an evaluation that, with some variations, has been current since, say, Wellhausen and Mommsen? According to that evaluation, Herod was an eminently capable ruler who, as Professor Momigliano puts it, "at his best . . . fell short of greatness and at his worst . . . was little more than a creature of cruelty." That picture still seems to fit.

Yet Mr. Perowne is not alone in his overestimation of Herod. He is following in the footsteps of Dr. Arnold Toynbee and of Professor A. H. M. Jones, whose book *The Herods of Judaea* (1938), I hasten to add, maintains its place as the best popular monograph. Nevertheless, as I see it, to regard the appellation of "great" justified simply because Herod was able "to secure for Jewry a peaceful and prosperous existence in a secular world" is to indulge in an inflationary use of "great."

To perceive Herod in his true proportions, it is enough to place him alongside the man whom he himself looked up to as the fountainhead of all wisdom, and whose cult he—the caricature of a Jew—propagated wherever he could: Augustus. As a political, intellectual, and human figure, Herod simply is dwarfed by the Roman. Where the first Princeps laid foundations for generations to come, Herod, with all his brilliance and energy, left ruins. Whereas Augustus was perfectly at home in Hellenic as well as in Roman culture, Herod—in W. W. Tarn's words—remained "a barbarian beneath his varnish." He was fated, as Wellhausen put it, to become "an ape of civilization," a culturally uprooted Levantine whose Hellenism was as superficial as his Judaism.

Nor does Herod show up any better when compared with Augustus purely in terms of character. If the way a person dies means his ultimate fulfillment and revelation, then no two politically allied men were more unlike than Herod and Augustus. When Augustus died, he was at peace with himself, even capable of a jest at his own expense, and surrounded and mourned by his family, his people, the whole Mediterranean world. When Herod died, lonely and in agony of body and soul, a nightmare of murder, fear, and hate came at last to an end, and the air of Judaea became sweeter to breathe.

And yet both rulers had set out on their careers as callous young men ready to strike down and kill anyone who stood in their path. Then an amazing thing had happened. No sooner did Octavian rise to the dignity of Augustus than the *persona* of gentleness fitted him like a glove. Herod, on the other hand, became a byword for senseless cruelty in a world that after Actium rapidly turned away from the brutal habits of the revolutionary era. The ethical standards of the period, to which Mr. Perowne refers apologetically, far from extenuating Herod's draconic practices, bring them into sharp relief. To achieve true greatness, Herod would have had to conquer the daemon in his own heart; instead, he remained completely at the mercy of his own sadistic and destructive urges—turning thereby into an agent of his own destruction. The irony of the matter lies in the fact that without this quality of dramatic failure Herod's figure would hardly loom so large in the annals of history. Not his triumphs but his domestic catastrophe fascinated the historians of old, and it has continued to fascinate dramatists through the ages.

Yet there is another side to the medal. Whatever we may think of Herod as a king and a man, there can be no question but that his forceful intervention in the destinies of the Jews had such far-reaching consequences as to place him among the most important historical personages of his time.

To appreciate this, Herod's career must be seen in the context of the great Jewish revolution which, sparked off by Antiochus Epiphanes (the Seleucid king of Syria whose

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attempt to Hellenize the Jews provoked the Maccabean revolt) and culminating in the destruction of the Second Commonwealth, not only entailed the transmutation of the Jews into a Diaspora nation, but also paved the way for the acceptance of a Judaic form of religion by the whole Mediterranean world. In this movement it was Herod's lot to play a role corresponding to that of Sulla in the parallel Roman revolution.

What he, like Sulla, meant to achieve was the restoration and perfection of a system that had broken down: the kind of Hellenistic monarchy aimed at by the Hasmoneans. Yet in undermining the twin pillars of the theocratic establishment—High Priesthood and Sanhedrin—and in applying utterly ruthless coercive methods, he unwittingly created the conditions which led to the speedy annihilation of his own life work by the disruptive forces which he had but temporarily tamed or driven underground. Herod's political failure thus constitutes a classic instance of what Hegel called the "cunning of Reason."

WHEN Herod died, his neo-Solomonic empire fell to pieces. The lid was off again. The revolution resumed its course, not only with an increase of violence proportionate to the degree of Herodian repression, but also with a "new look." On the morrow of Herod's death, militant Zealotism and political Messianism make their first real entry into the arena of Palestinian party conflict. The "nationalism" of pre-Herodian times was as harmless as gunpowder compared with the dynamite of the new fighting creed.

The three decades of Herod's reign were Zealotry's incubation period. None but Herod blasted the Messianic flame into a searing fire; he alone was the illegitimate father of the Zealot party, which opposed all Herodian tendencies. Nemesis could not reveal her hand more clearly than in the fact that Judas of Galilee, the founder of that party whose do-or-die policy spelt ruin for Herod's magnificent Temple, most probably was the son of the Galilean rebel leader Hezekiah whose wanton execution formed one of the spectacular moments of Herod's early career. One may argue, as Mr. Perowne does, that the catastrophe of the year 70 C.E. proved Herod right in the harsh treatment he meted out to "jealous" and "meddling" Pharisees and their adherents; yet there is, I firmly believe, greater justice in the view that it was Herod who in the first instance set this train of events afoot, with all their incalculable consequences for the future of Judaism as well as for that of Christianity. This is exactly why the negative or functional greatness of Herod's role in history can hardly be disputed.

If the people's consent makes a king, then Herod's true kingdom lay outside Palestine among the Jews of the Diaspora. They took him to their hearts because they could benefit from his prestige and munificence without having to live under his rule. To the Jews of Palestine, he was not a new Solomon but a new Pharaoh, to be humbly accepted as an instrument of divine punishment for the nation's sins. The "matchless" realist had woefully failed to gauge the master reality he had to cope with, which was the spirit of his people. Small wonder that the Jews did not look back nostalgically, even in their darkest hours, to the Herodian interlude as a golden age of *their* history. Rather than Herod they remembered Hillel, of whom the historian Josephus says nothing.

Mr. Perowne thinks it less than generous that Herod, the builder of the Temple, should be mentioned in the Mishnah solely as the breeder of a special type of pigeons. I cannot agree. Considering the legacy of hatred he left behind, I think it kind rather than ungenerous. There is an air of forgiveness about this remembrance of Herod the Great as a pigeon-breeder. As a comment on historical greatness it is unsurpassed even by Tolstoy.

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# FROM THE AMERICAN SCENE

## SECOND WIFE

### . . . *And the Children*

DAVID BOROFF

WE DIDN'T want him to marry again. Why should he? Certainly not to satisfy the flesh. A gray-haired man with seven grown children! Companionship? For Papa? Absurd! He was the shyest of men. Give him a Yiddish paper to read and three nights of back-breaking work each week as a baker, and that was his life. That and looking after the steam heat in the winter. He didn't even go to the Yiddish theater.

That's why we were so startled when two years after Mamma died Papa started to dress up on Saturday nights and slip out of the six-family house in Bensonhurst and head for the Sea Beach Express.

At first we used to question him, with that disregard of privacy so characteristic of immigrant Jewish life.

"Where you going, Pa?" I would say, looking up from my college algebra assignment.

Sam and Gershon would stop slamming the ping-pong ball on the dining room table, walk into the kitchen, and take up the question a little tauntingly. "Yeah, Pa, where you going?" It never occurred to them that they had no right to ask, nor to Papa that he could refuse to answer.

He looked trapped. There he was seated at the kitchen table, spooning up the soup prepared by Marian, who lived in one of the downstairs apartments in the house that Papa owned. His left foot would start to beat a nervous tattoo on the kitchen floor.

"I'm going to New York," he said, naturally in Yiddish. And New York at that time meant only one thing to us: the Lower East Side, the heartland. It was where the family had come from, and Cherry Street was vivid in our minds. We knew we were lucky to have escaped it. Then why did we keep going back there for suits and for weddings in sweaty little halls? Now Papa was going there. Clearly it was a place where things happened.

There were five boys and two girls in the family. The oldest two were already married. Those at home ranged between fifteen and twenty-five. We had been fond of our mother, maybe too fond. She had exercised a tyranny over the family. A stout woman but handsome, she had quarreled chronically with Papa. With us she was different. She knew how to fuss over us, and she was really overworked, forever trapped in the kitchen by a truly spectacular inefficiency, forever making steak and fried potatoes for every member of the family.

They would fight, and Papa would begin a long, patient, slow-building tribal imprecation against her family culminating in the final snarling outcry of *Elke's a tochter!* We used to imagine some monstrous disgrace in that remote Polish village of our mother's family. It turned out simply that Grandma Elke talked too much. Nor did Mamma endure this taunt passively. She would turn on his parents—the cheapskates . . . they lived in dirt . . . they didn't have a decent coat to wear. . . .

Poor Papa would retreat to the bedroom

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DAVID BOROFF has written for the New York *Times*, the New York *Post*, and other publications. His sketch "Camp" appeared in our July 1956 issue.



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he shared with three of the boys, muttering under his breath against marriage and the follies of wives and the money thrown out by foolish women.

After Mamma's death, she became a kind of martyr to us, killed by overwork and an extravagant devotion to the family. "With so many kids working, depression or no, why couldn't she have got help once a week? And why did she have to do her own laundry?" And in back of our minds we heard, resentfully, Papa's perennial complaining about money thrown out: *"Arosgeverfene gelt,"* he used to say; the phrase still beats iambically in my mind.

We would listen to a Belle Baker record of "A Yiddishe Mamma" and another shameless tear-jerker, "Old Fashioned Lady." And poor Papa had to participate in this hagiolatry.

We started to discuss Papa's trips to New York. The first thing we did was to telephone Max, who was the oldest. And the oldest son, the first really to read or write English in an immigrant Jewish family, the one who signs the report cards of the younger ones—he is, in effect, the head of the family.

"Look, what can you do?" Max said. "He's a man. Maybe he wants to marry again."

Max was inclined to be easygoing. Anyway his wife was pregnant again, and he was going into business. He had his hands full. But the rest of us wouldn't take so tolerant a view. We argued that the two-year interval between Mamma's death and Papa's Saturday night jaunts was too brief. We really meant that he hadn't done penance long enough.

But our main quarrel with him was that he was not taking us into his confidence. Every decision in this family-collective had to be made in the open. There could be no secret lives, no private emotions.

Even Bernice, eighteen and boy-crazy, submitted to this family hegemony. Every guy she met, every stray pick-up on Bay Parkway, was carefully scrutinized by all of us. Only Papa would let them alone. At most he would smile with helpless benignity. Bernice had the bad luck to get involved with an Italian boy. He was nice enough, a scissors-grinder in the garment center who made a good living. But an Italian! The two oldest boys went to look him over. Bernice was supposed to meet him in front of the *Times* building. (Her rebellion would never carry so far that she would refuse to tell where and when she was meeting him.) Max and Oscar circumnavigated the *Times* building like musical comedy detectives, full of hoarse whispers and black suspicions. There was even one overdressed matron waiting to meet her husband who, they were convinced, was a white-slaver determined to prey on their sister.

But it was Larry, the youngest, who was most disturbed by Papa's outings. He was fifteen, and it was summer. And for the first time there were the girls on the block. His eye was constantly drawn to his friend Sidney's stoop, where they sat with secret smiles. Late on Friday afternoon, obeying a collective impulse, the girls would walk out of their homes, washed, burnished, and glistening in the fading light, their young bodies moving mysteriously under their light summer dresses. Larry and his friends would stop their punchball game to watch, full of adolescent yearning. In the evening the yearners crowded up to Sidney's stoop. They picked leaves from the hedges, they leaned toward each other in adolescent solidarity, but pulled sharply away from any real encounter with the girls.

On Saturday nights that summer there was almost always a party for Larry to go to. One or another of the girls, Ettie or Sylvia or Pearlie, would buy some Woolworth candy, a few bottles of soda, and there was a party. Or sometimes, excruciatingly self-conscious, he would negotiate the rites of the date—the movie, the ice-cream soda, the fumbling for something—*anything*—to talk about.

But what disturbed Larry most was when he went to his bedroom to dress for Saturday night. There was Papa going through the same motions: the new suit, the unfamiliar white shirt, even cuff links. They were conscious of a grotesque, parodic element in all this, each imitating the other in a stiff, clumsy ceremonial. Once they even happened to leave at the same moment, Larry on his way to plump little Pearlie and Papa going the other way toward the station.

We heard vaguely that he was seeing a

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*shadchen*. We were emancipated enough, even twenty-five years ago, to regard a *shadchen* as a comic figure. He was in a class with Bluhmie, the lady bootlegger, who also had a community function. We used to see her walking agitatedly through the streets of Bensonhurst, carrying a few bottles of whiskey for a wedding or engagement party, her toothless gums working furiously. We had heard of Al Capone, but what did racketeers have to do with Bluhmie who took care of *simchus* and did cupping besides?

A *shadchen* was like Bluhmie—a trifle absurd, vaguely irrelevant, and not to be taken seriously. In time, however, we got used to the idea. We had a vision of lengthy negotiations, Papa's left leg tapping nervously, a shy, self-deprecating smile on his face as he declined one middle-aged charmer after another.

Of course we had a clear idea of what he was after. We saw a wholesomely unmodish woman, much like Mamma, perhaps a little gentler of tongue. She would have children of her own, lots of them, and she would talk Yiddish (but *Litvak* not *Galitsyaner*, to us the idiom of termagants and crooks). Somberly dressed, her face innocent of makeup—except powder, that was all right—she would come into the house and go straight to the ice-box to see what was inside. She would then roll up her sleeves, exposing heavy forearms, and get started in the kitchen, expostulating all the while about how thin we looked and how badly we had been eating.

A FEW months later, she did come. Creature of habit that he was, Papa brought her early in the morning, the time he usually came home from work with a bagful of rolls and jelly doughnuts higher than his head. This time he brought his new wife. No warning, no hints. Nothing.

They had been married the evening before. Her grown children had served as witnesses. And without delay, she had come for the confrontation. She stood there, smiling stubbornly, determined to over-ride any opposition with unflinching good humor. "I'm your new Aunt Hannah," she kept saying with strident cheerfulness, the smile working over her face, one gold tooth in the corner of her mouth glinting malevolently.

We looked at her with astonishment, and one by one we went into the bedroom and found the others lying there, rolling and howling.

"My God," Gershon said, "who would have believed it?"

"The old boy's got more pep than you gave him credit for," Alex said half admiringly, half in protest.

"Did you see her shoes—and that dress?" Bernice asked.

The plain truth was that nobody could have done more violence to our preconception of whom Papa should marry. She had bright henna'd hair, a dazzling yellow dress, orange satin shoes, and an enormous floppy summer hat which could not successfully conceal the foolish, lipsticked mouth. Instead of a Yiddish Mamma, we had gotten this. And with a *Galitsyaner* accent! (Whenever there was conflict later on, Bernice would say with doleful monotony, "What can you expect from a *Glitz* anyway?")

Papa had fooled us all. Nothing in our experience could account for her. What was Jewish was equated rigorously in our minds with virtue and simplicity. We had known vaguely that there were some Jewish women who wore makeup and had broken away from the traditional pieties. There was even a certain furtive gaiety I had observed at a small Catskill hotel, a restlessness on the porch after supper while my mother and other *nice* people were singing Yiddish songs on the lawn. But there wasn't much of that.

Aunt Hannah became a symbol of a whole sub-continent of living whose existence we had denied. In a word, there was a *kurvishe* flavor about her—in the giddy hair and satin shoes at 8 A.M., in the nudges and winks she directed at the boys. "Oh, your Aunt Hannah, she knows what you t'ink about," she would say. And there were her children. "The apples don't fall far from the tree," my older sister Marian would say in Yiddish.

Aunt Hannah's children came, one at a time, to look us over. Polite and circumspect, they had been told that we were *refined*, a family full of college graduates.

The older son was all right. He was a familiar enough type. Pot-bellied and cigar-smoking, he had shrewd, nervous eyes and a timid wife. He was a small businessman—

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some kind of leather business in Williamsburg—and we could see he was pleased his mother had re-married. She had cost him money.

But the others were something else. There was the younger son, Mike, an ex-Golden Glover, we were told. We later discovered this was a fabrication. He merely had working-class muscles, a limp handshake, and a dull mind. He soon came to live with us, and he introduced the *Journal-American* to our home, and on Saturday afternoon, after work, he went out for *chinks*. Later he got a girl into trouble and had to marry her.

Aunt Hannah's older daughter, Sally, was separated from her husband and was living with a big Polack who, to our immense delight, got into a fight with cops a week after Papa got married. He was a big taciturn fellow, good-natured enough but with an old grudge against cops which came alive when he had a few drinks.

Papa liked him. There was a kind of old country bond between them—the Jew and the peasant. Steve had thinning hair but an astonishing torso and massive hands. He worked as an automobile mechanic and had an old roadster which ran like a dream. Once I went to the beach with their whole family—a carnival of breast, haunch, and muscle. My own family seemed pallid by contrast.

Sally herself was a blowzy, good-natured woman who looked after her daughter conscientiously and never insisted that she accept Steve as a father. The girl, fifteen and nubile, used to read poetry. But she was enough her mother's daughter that when September rolled around, she became one of the girls on a Mardi Gras float at Coney Island. I went to see her. She was standing, one knee bent slightly, in satin shorts and halter on a float representing the spirit of the Edison Company.

But it was Teddy who seized our imaginations most. She was small, dark, and intense—the kind of girl who when single looks knowing, and when married still looks single. She had been vaguely in show business. In any case, she had made the annual shuttle run for a long time between Miami and New York. She was now married to a rich Miamian. He was in slot machines, we were told. Later we learned that he actually worked for the City of Miami Beach, something to do with slot machines, which were legal then. And this too gave us a startled pleasure.

EVERY summer the heat drove Teddy to New York. She came alone; her husband remained in Miami. Almost every evening, a big car would stop in front of our house and a man would pick Teddy up. He would be tall and flashily dressed, and he would say only as much to us as he had to. She would get home late, long after we were asleep, and spend the next day in a housecoat doing her nails, moving with nervous grace against the background of rhumba music from the radio.

Occasionally, indifferently companionable, she would dance with us, show us a fancy rhumba break, or explode into an adolescent Lindy leaving us standing open-mouthed and helpless in the middle of the living room. In all fairness to her, she didn't tease us. What did she need us for? But Gershon, who was hanging around Greenberg's candy store with the boys, subscribed to the notion that a girl who *does* will do so with anybody. Anyway he *tried* a few times during those afternoon dansants.

He had picked up a piece of candy-store folklore that just dancing close to a susceptible girl would reduce her to a quivering mass. He tried it out on Teddy. She leaned away adroitly.

"What an angle I'm dancing at," she jeered. Gershon flushed angrily.

Aunt Hannah tolerated her daughters' vagaries. She understood her children, she told us. "I'm not such an old woman," she insisted. "I got young ideas. Harry," she would say, Papa's name ringing unfamiliarly in our ears, "he don't know how to live. But I'll teach him yet."

She changed the house. The old furniture went out. It was no great loss. But the stuff she brought in alternately outraged and amused us. She hung leather portières at the entrance to the living room, and there was satin-finished upholstery. Worst of all, there was a French doll with a cigarette stuck in her mouth sitting in one of the armchairs. Every time we wanted to sit in it, we threw her on the floor. And there were red bulbs in the electric fixtures. It was quite a place.

When Bernice had a date—and that was

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quite often—Aunt Hannah would officiously lead the young man into the living room. The room would be suffused with a pale scarlet light. The boy, a Bensonhurst innocent, would look uneasily from the rakish doll to Aunt Hannah, brassy and friendly. Aunt Hannah would trot discreetly off, bellowing to Bernice at the other end of the apartment. "Bernie," she would shout (she had learned from Teddy that masculine names are somehow sexier), "a gentleman to see you!" And the boy would sit there and wonder: where am I?

Our relationship with Aunt Hannah began to settle down after a while. She wasn't a bad-natured woman, just a foolish one. Her Yiddish, with its Galician accent, disturbed us. She bragged too much—even about her first husband who, we later learned, died in a nut-house. And every time she prepared a meal, she exacted verbal tribute. "You *leck* your finger from Aunt Hannah's cooking, don't you?" she would leer at us. We would play-act for her at first but got tired of it. She also tried to push Bernice into marriage with anyone at all. Another Italian boy came to call once. We sat like a tribunal. Aunt Hannah was all smiles and gurgles. "What kind of Jewish woman is this?" we asked each other. We sensed that she was trying to narrow the gap between her children and us.

But there was no doubt about one thing: she was good for Papa in a way we hadn't dreamed possible. He shared a bedroom with her, something he hadn't done for years with our mother. We took to calling him among ourselves "the little bridegroom," and we snickered when we would see her in a dressing gown before going to bed, her little eyes sparkling behind thick glasses, or Papa sidling into the bedroom at an early hour.

A week after they were married, they made a trip to the East Side and came back with two new suits. We couldn't remember when he had last bought a suit—probably eight years ago for Max's wedding. She bought him after-shave lotion and cologne, which he couldn't bring himself to use. And she called him Harry in a way that reminded us that it was a young man's name, breezy and happy-go-lucky. Many years too late, Papa almost became the young, comradely father of our imagination.

She even took him to Florida the next winter for a three-week vacation. She was part of the Jewish advance guard that establishes the low-priced beachheads in the resorts. They stayed at an *efficiency*, a word we had never heard. Papa even went to Hialeah once, but smiled helplessly when we asked him how he liked the races.

He liked the attention, he liked being a husband. (For years he had been only a father.) But he didn't like giving up the old roles. We would come home and find him buried in the closets, silently straightening them out. Sometimes, in an access of nostalgia, he would put on his old, pre-Aunt Hannah shirts with the sleeves cut off.

In just a year, things began to fall apart. Aunt Hannah had assumed that there was money in the family. There was none to speak of. The college graduates had been invested in her mind with magical potency. With five boys in the family, she thought she would really fall into something—a *schmalzgrub!* Instead she inherited a big apartment and headaches. When the money didn't materialize, she turned shrewish.

First she limited our milk drinking. "What are you," she demanded truculently, "milk babies?" She had her son, poor nerveless Mike, put a lock on the refrigerator. And she would dole the milk out to us. This was funny at first. What Jewish home is anything less than a cornucopia of food and drink? The idea of being denied food after having had it pressed on us aggressively all our lives was a small relief. But we also genuinely liked milk. And the daily allotment soon began to bother us.

Why go into detail? Aunt Hannah was through. She didn't want to be housekeeper for another woman's children. She took to staying in bed for whole days, even letting her bleached hair go gray at the edges and roots. She complained of mysterious ailments, although we knew she was as strong as a horse. She accused us of being ungrateful and supercilious. ("My children didn't go to college, but Mike—he don't make a good living? He got more common sense than you.") She picked fights.

Finally, she picked a fight with the wrong person—from her point of view, I suppose, he was the right person. She accused Marian's husband of free-loading on his father-in-law. He was a hard-working, kind-

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hearted man who was sweating out the depression pushing a hack. When she said this, we had to restrain him from hitting her. His fourteen-hour workdays welled up in him in an insanity of rage.

She went shrieking through the streets about the terrible family she had to live with. They were trying to kill her. Poor Papa sat white-faced in their bedroom. It was true about stepmothers. What would the neighbors think? Ah, they knew her for what she was.

WE HAD to break up. That was clear. Aunt Hannah, her fury almost spent, went to her daughter in Coney Island, the one with the Polack. "I won't stay with those louses," she bellowed in the quiet afternoon street. Papa emerged from the bedroom.

"I'll go to her, just to keep her quiet," he said. "A crazy woman," he added. He cursed under his breath. "I'll be back later," he announced when he left.

But he didn't come back later, nor the next day, nor the day after that. A week later, her oldest son came in his car, mumbled a shame-faced greeting, and took away her clothes. The following day a moving van rolled up and emptied the apartment of her furniture. Only the leather portières remained to frame the naked room. Bernice unscrewed the red bulbs from the living room fixtures. "Well, thank God for that," she said.

Two weeks after he left, Papa came back. It was seven in the morning after a night's work in the bakery. He came up the steps, let himself in with his own key, and neatly set the towering bag of rolls and breakfast cake on a chair. He hung up his coat and jacket and prepared a percolator full of coffee. When we came into the kitchen, eyes full of sleep, our mouths working sourly, he was sitting there. He looked the way he always did: shyly proprietary, a little man but not without a certain masculine dignity. His two hands were interlaced around a mug of coffee. His thick gray hair was well combed. He was wearing a good shirt, not one of his sleeveless specials. She's looking after him, we thought.

There were no explanations, just the usual desultory kitchen talk—about the furnace, about Uncle Jake, about the relatives in Poland. When we went to school, he was still sitting there, his back against the wall. He stayed until noon. A few days later he came again, deposited the bag of rolls on the edge of a chair, and prepared coffee. This time he woke us up in tentative reassertion of his family duties. Later that morning he packed his clothes in an old valise and went back to Coney Island.

And that's the way it was until he died seven years later. Three times a week, after each night's work, he came to us and sat in the kitchen, ruminative and voluble over the three cups of coffee. Always after the second cup he would undo the top button of his trousers. He always left the bag of rolls and cake with us. But toward the end, he used to fill a smaller bag, which he took back for his wife.

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# CEDARS OF LEBANON

## "GOD, THE TORAH, AND ISRAEL"

### *From the Sources of Jewish Mysticism*

THE founder of Hasidism, Israel Baal Shem Tov (1700-1760), taught only by word of mouth, but his sayings have been preserved for us in the writings of his disciples, and in abstracts of these writings made by later followers. One such abstract is the work *Kether Shem Tov* (The Crown of the Good Name), which cites as an authentic teaching of the master the saying, "God, the Torah, and Israel are one." This famous saying has been invoked by modern writers to support a variety of theological positions; but from its complete context, as given in the *Kether*, it seems evident that "Israel" is used in the sense of the individual Jew who cleaves to God, and not in the meaning of "Israel the people." In fact, the Baal Shem was merely paraphrasing a statement of the *Zohar*, the central work of Jewish mysticism. This particular passage has been omitted from the standard English translation of the *Zohar* (Soncino Press); below I present my own translation of it, from the Aramaic original, together with a translation of the *Kether* excerpt.—JAKOB J. PETUCHOWSKI.

**The Two Levels**

Rabbi Eleazar asked his father, Rabbi Simeon: "Behold, we have learned, 'It is forbidden to teach the Torah to a heathen'; and the scholars of Babylonia have fittingly drawn our attention to the verse, 'He hath not dealt so with any nation' [Ps. 147:20]. But why, seeing that this Psalm says, 'He declareth His word unto Jacob,' does it also have to say, 'His statutes and His ordinances unto Israel'?"

His father said to him: "Come and see, Eleazar. Israel are fortunate in that God hath implanted in them this supreme and holy portion; as it is written: 'For I give you good doctrine' [Proverbs 4:2]. That is to say, I give it to *you*, but not to the peoples that worship idols."

And because this is the highest and most precious secret, the very Name of God, it follows that the whole Torah is both secret and revealed on account of the mystery of His Name. And, because of this, Israel exists on two levels, the secret and the revealed one. This is what we have learned: "Three levels are connected one with the other: the Holy One, blessed be He, the Torah, and Israel." And each one of them exists on two levels, the secret and the revealed. And thus does Israel exist on two levels. This is the meaning of the verse, "He declareth His word unto Jacob, His statutes and His ordinances unto Israel" [Ps. 147:19]. These are two different levels, "Jacob" and "Israel." One is revealed, the other is secret.

What does this mean? It means that to him who is circumcised and marked with the Holy Name we impart the revealed matters of the Torah. That is to say, we make known to him the general outlines, and we caution him about the strict observance of the commandments of the Torah. But no more, unless he rises to another level. This is the meaning of the verse: "He declareth His word unto Jacob." For the [subsequent] words, "His statutes and His ordinances unto Israel," have reference to a higher level. And it is written: "Thy name shall not be called any more Jacob, but Israel shall be thy name."

"His statutes and His ordinances unto Israel"—these are the mysteries of the Torah, the ordinances of the Torah, and the secrets of the Torah, which one need not reveal



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except to him who has reached a suitably higher level. [*Zohar,* Acharé Moth, p. 73a]

**Communion with God**

The letters of the Torah are the chambers of God through which He channels the emanation of His light—as it is said in the *Zohar*: "The Holy One, blessed be He, and the Torah are all one." And into these letters man must bring all of his devotional intent (*kavvanah*), which is his very soul. For *kavvanah* is the soul. And this is the meaning of the "cleaving" — to God — (*devekuth*): "The Holy One, blessed be He, the Torah, and Israel are all one." And this is the meaning of "disembodiment," that is to say, a man must strip his soul from his body, so that his soul may be clothed in those thoughts by means of which he is able to speak of, and to perceive, several of the upper worlds. [*Kether Shem Tov,* Part II, p. 2a]

## ON CARLEY RIDGE

### LEONARD WOLF

I WENT looking in the western foothills,
In the country of the deer and the coyote,
I, the Jew, examined manzanita
And the crooning wood doves, wood doves,
Lizards, rattlesnakes, and quarreling squirrels.

I climbed alone into those hills,
A Jew, into the oaks and pines, to see
How Gentile nature was, by how much sweeter
She, than all my Jewish loves,
My Jewish quarrels.

Naked on a western hill, I cried,
"A Jew is but a man." I was surprised
In looking down, to see that I had lied,
Or had forgotten, I was circumcised.

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LEONARD WOLF, who now is teaching at San Francisco State College, has had verse printed in our pages before—this is his fourth appearance.

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# ON THE HORIZON

## FREUD THE PHILOSOPHER

*Volume III of Ernest Jones's Biography*

HANS MEYERHOFF

A YEAR after the world-wide celebrations of the hundredth anniversary of Freud's birth, Ernest Jones has completed the third and last volume of his biography of his friend and teacher.* This is bad timing: so many words have recently poured forth from so many pens that the mind is surfeited. Thus it is almost embarrassing to join in praise of Dr. Jones's biography. Yet it is true that his work ranks, both on literary and scientific grounds, with the great biographies of the ages, for it combines two excellences as difficult as they are rare: the delineation of an unforgettable personal portrait, and the reconstruction of an enormously complex scientific system. But just because Dr. Jones's is an accomplishment of unique distinction, it is only fair to add that this last volume has its flaws and defects: it does not achieve the same mastery over its diffuse and difficult subject matter that made the first volume such an exciting intellectual adventure.

As far as Freud himself is concerned, it is now a cliché to repeat that he was a "maker of the modern mind." Yet perhaps it is appropriate to ask, after the echoes of the recent celebrations have faded away, what the success of "Freudianism" actually means in our culture.

Dr. Jones offers some highly perceptive and pertinent remarks on this question. "What chiefly impresses" the psychoanalyst, he writes, "is the shallowness of so much of what passes as acceptance of Freud's ideas, and the superficiality with which they are treated. They are so often bandied about lightly as a form of lip service that one cannot help suspecting that much of the so-called acceptance is really a subtle form of rejection, a protection against assimilation of their profound import." This reflects Freud's own skepticism. Even when great fame had come to him, Freud never underestimated the degree of resistance that continued underneath the surface acceptance of his ideas. In proud moments, he used to compare himself to Copernicus and Darwin. As Copernicus had displaced the earth from the center of the universe, as Darwin had deprived man of his previously unique place in the animal kingdom, so psychoanalysis had delivered a third blow to human *amour propre* by dislodging man from his alleged sovereignty in his own house. He did not think that mankind would take this dethronement lightly.

In this "last phase" of his life Freud returned, "after making a life-long detour through the natural sciences, to the cultural problems which had fascinated me long ago, when I was a youth scarcely old enough to think." What Freud did was to superimpose a general theory of man and culture upon the technical, therapeutic aspects of psychoanalysis. In doing this he had the courage

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To WHAT extent have Freud's ideas actually influenced our culture? HANS MEYERHOFF contends that they have had far less effect than appears on the surface. A visiting professor of humanities at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology and the author of *Time in Literature* (1955), Mr. Meyerhoff contributed "Contra Simone Weil" to our September 1957 number.

**The Life and Work of Sigmund Freud*, Vol. 3, Basic Books, 537 pp, $7.50.



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at the age of sixty to revise some of his own basic ideas. These revisions caused considerable consternation even in psychoanalytic circles. They also widened, I believe, the gap between Freud and the prevailing winds of doctrine in our own culture. The summing up of his life's work recalls the highly offensive nature of some of Freud's basic ideas and brings home the strange ambivalence with which our culture has absorbed the impact of psychoanalysis and the intellectual legacy of its founder.

First (in time) among the "offenses" is the discovery of the unconscious. It is, of course, true that the unconscious is on everybody's lips; but it is "hardly possible," as Freud noted himself, "to exaggerate the power of inner resistance against the acceptance of unconscious tendencies," in the specific way in which he understood them. We repeat, after Freud, that the discovery of the unconscious world has deepened the Socratic quest for self-knowledge. Today "few people," as Dr. Jones says, "would claim a complete knowledge of themselves"; but I am not sure that we have even begun to think seriously about the baffling consequences that this new look of man has for such problems as human motivation, freedom, and responsibility. According to Freud's final theory of man, parts of the ego, as well as the super-ego, are submerged in the subterranean world of the unconscious, where they mingle with the unruly forces of the id. How far can we carry our old comfortable conceptual stereotypes over into these new dimensions of depth psychology? What happens to some of our most cherished ideas of man in the light of unconscious motivation? I don't presume to know myself; but it seems to me that the standard practice is to affirm the truth of Freud's discovery, and then to proceed as if it didn't make any difference.

Freud adapted Darwinism to psychology. Eventually, he composed a model of man in which the biological heritage was consigned to the realm of the id. This has been another major stumbling block; for the id is a terrifying world. Freud compared it to a "seething cauldron" from which love and death instincts erupt in perennial struggle with the so-called higher achievements of man and culture. In religious language, the instincts are "demonic" agents that reveal us in our "creatureliness." It is true that Freud showed, not least by the example he set in his own life, how this biological fate could be transcended and transformed into a human existence; but it is also true that the repudiation of Freud's "biological" thinking has been the point of departure for all deviations of psychoanalysis. And it is hardly the case that our culture has accepted Freud's thesis that man's creatureliness can be converted into civilization, science, and art by man's own powers, a process of spiritualization, or sublimation, which masters the very energies that, to begin with, are so threatening. For the most part, we continue to think that this task surpasses human powers and can be accomplished only with the aid of miracle, magic, and authority—or by means of reinterpreting the unconscious world so that it loses most of its threatening aspects.*

We are still a long way from accepting what Thomas Mann hailed as Freud's message for a "humanism of the future"—not to succumb to the seductive lure of the unconscious, nor to appease it by magical thinking, but to overcome and appropriate it for a new image of man. If such an ideal is not itself a delusion, it obviously belongs to the distant future.

Everybody knows that Freud "discovered" sex; and presumably it is here to stay. But whether it has come to stay with us in the sense in which Freud conceived of it is still another question. It is, of course, known that his early treatment of sexuality, especially infantile sexuality, caused the most violent and vitriolic denunciations of psychoanalysis as the scourge of Satan. But before we congratulate ourselves on how far we have come in our enlightenment since the beginning of the century, it is perhaps also worth noting that Freud's libido theory has been a bone of contention even in psychoanalytic circles—from the early defection of Jung to the later revisions of the

*This is the device used by C. G. Jung. Behind the "shadow" world of the "personal" unconscious there lies the "collective" unconscious—a part of which suddenly becomes a source of the deepest wisdom and the highest *conscious* aspirations of man.

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"cultural school"—and that it may have been adopted by our culture in a form which Freud himself would not have recognized. Thus one reads in the recent works of Erich Fromm that "creative love" is a composite of care, responsibility, respect, and knowledge; and one also observes that, in this highly popular revision of psychoanalysis, sex is quietly exiled from the domain of Eros.

Now, on the subject of sexuality Freud was uncompromising. Why? Not, as is often said, because he was a "pan-sexualist." Freud always knew, long before the "cultural school" came along, that social and historical conditions influence human behavior; but he also believed that the libido theory was absolutely essential to an analysis "in depth," whether the patient was the individual or society. Giving up the libido theory, therefore, meant surrendering the depth-dimension of psychoanalysis and returning to a pre-Freudian type of psychology. The total human situation, according to Freud, was a complex system in which external nature, social institutions, and libidinal drives were caught in dynamic interactions. His offending emphasis on sexuality implied a recognition that the libido is a newcomer to this triad and that the biological fate adds a new dimension to our understanding of man and society. If the libido theory is dropped or re-interpreted without the sexual sting, we return to the commonplace thesis that man is a product of nature and culture—something we have known all along.

In this respect he was "the revolutionary," as he told his Swiss friend Ludwig Binswanger, while Binswanger was "the conservative"; for Binswanger returned to the traditional approach of analyzing the highest products of culture (art, religion, etc., etc.) in their own terms, i.e., divorced from the "lowly dwelling" of the libido. Freud's was a revolutionary attitude (a) because nobody, save Nietzsche, had approached culture from this biological perspective and (b) because it enabled him to judge, and criticize, civilization on the scales of libidinal satisfactions and sacrifices.

If Freud was adamant on the significance of sexuality, he was more permissive about the death wish. Originally introduced in *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*, the death wish preoccupied Freud increasingly in his later years and deeply influenced his thinking about man's nature and destiny. It quickly became a center of controversy; and, as Dr. Jones points out, the original doctrine is no longer held even in orthodox psychoanalytic circles. I am not competent to judge the clinical evidence; but I think it is fairly clear why the destructive or death instinct occupied a central place in Freud's thought—in addition to the deep personal meaning it had in Freud's own life.

The death wish puts one source of suffering into the organism itself. The human being is divided even in his deepest layers—not only, as for Hegel, on the highest level of consciousness. This division, in turn, and the perennial test of strength between the two immortal adversaries, Eros and Thanatos, make a satisfactory solution of the human equation even more precarious than the necessities of nature and the repressions of culture have already made it. In the light of the terrifying expansion of "man's destructive powers," on which Dr. Jones comments in conclusion, it is rather odd that few people, if any, have drawn what would seem to be the natural conclusion from a denial of Freud's death wish. If he was mistaken—if aggression is not a primary instinct, but derived from frustration—the present situation would indicate that suffering, sacrifice, and frustration must be running amuck in our civilization, which, I suppose, is not an acceptable answer to the problem either. Moreover, it is curious to note that the Christian dogma of "original sin," which at least in part corresponds to Freud's doctrine, nowadays again commands a respectful hearing. Apparently, what makes good sense in a theological context, where the evil is absolute, does not make any sense in a natural or human setting where, as Freud insisted, man might at least achieve some partial mastery over himself.

THE human situation, according to Freud, is always precarious and ambiguous. I have tried to show elsewhere* that this outlook on life was a characteristic ingredient of Freud's *Weltanschauung*. There are no pat formulas for universal happiness, peace

*"Freud and the Ambiguity of Culture," *Partisan Review* (Winter 1957).

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of mind, or creative love. Freud never preached morality; nor did he provide inspirational comfort; and he knew that this was another stumbling block to the acceptance of his views by his fellow men. For consolation, as he wrote in his old age, is "at bottom what they all demand—the frenzied revolutionary as passionately as the pious believer." And that is precisely what the various types of inspirational psychoanalysis, from Jung to Fromm, have come along to supply. (Regardless of whether they are right or wrong, they, not Freud, have captured the market.)

Freud's own attitude toward morality was extremely simple. Ethics was something "to be taken for granted"; and the much-maligned pleasure principle, modified in the light of reality, yields an ethical theory in the tradition of a refined Epicureanism or Stoicism. Not the pursuit of pleasure (which is the aim of the instincts), but the minimizing of pain, is the goal of human existence. "The more civilized and refined one is the more does one devote oneself to avoiding pain rather than seeking pleasure," Freud wrote to his future wife; and this formula accompanied him as a moral guide throughout life. It is quite different from, and more modest than, the numerous popular versions of psychoanalytically inspired happiness-theories and the exalted precepts of traditional ethics.

Freud knew suffering—in himself and in others. Yet this man, whose work has done so much to alleviate sickness and despair, also clung to the idea, as other great thinkers have done, that suffering and pain are inherent in the structure of the universe and indispensable for human progress. He never abandoned the conviction that "the gradual widening of human consciousness," which is the fruit of civilized existence, is accompanied by renunciation and a heightened susceptibility to pain. It was this conviction that led him to the melancholy conclusion that man's struggle for existence against the hardships of nature, the difficulties in society, and his own limits, would never yield a clear-cut permanent solution in terms of human happiness. Perhaps this was the greatest challenge he posed to the prevailing conceptions of Western culture, according to which life is unendurable and meaningless if there be no promise or hope of a happy end either in this life or in the hereafter. Again, it is no accident that all the popular revisions of Freud have come along to repudiate this challenge and to make the adjustments necessary to bring psychoanalysis into line with traditional hopes and aspirations.

In spirit and effect, these revisions—however helpful they may be for therapeutic purposes—are the very antithesis of Freud's outlook on life. His was a Promethean image of man. "The moment one inquires about the meaning and value of life one is sick," he wrote at the threshold of death. He meant that the question arose from a "surplus of unsatisfied libido" and reflected the individual's failure to give meaning to his life by his own powers. Independence, autonomy, integrity, and self-reliance are perhaps the most characteristic traits of Freud's personality. They expressed his ideal of man. It was his ambition, as we know, to reclaim territory for man that was lost or submerged, like the Zuider Sea; to gain consciousness and mastery, to the limits imposed by human nature and external necessity, over inner resources and remote realms of being—the unconscious, Eros, destruction, and super-ego—that had never been accessible to man. He believed that man could redeem this promise by his own powers, and that the prize was only worth winning if it were so earned. Any other solution seemed to him a betrayal of the inherent dignity of man.

That this image was more than an ideal he proved as much by the way he lived and died as by any arguments. This last volume brings to us the poignant story of how he prevailed over the prolonged agony of the cancer from which he died. That Freud, like Socrates, Marcus Aurelius, Spinoza, or Goethe, lived unaided and died unconsoled by a religious faith is obviously a stumbling block to a culture which holds that man can only be saved from his sickness unto death by powers beyond him.

Like Epicurus, Freud waged a lifelong campaign against the wish-world of religion—though he identified himself consciously as a Jew. As Dr. Jones shows, the religious issue aroused almost as much resentment against Freud as his treatment of sexuality. Throughout his life Freud in-

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sisted that "the *beginnings* [my emphasis] of religion, morality, social life, and art" are to be found in the Oedipus situation. When he first advanced the idea in *Totem and Taboo,* the public, including the experts, greeted this "fairy tale" with derision and scorn. Of all his works, this speculative inquiry into the origins of social life fared worst in its reception; yet Freud counted its last chapter among his three most valuable contributions.

Later, in *The Future of an Illusion,* Freud broadened his approach to religion. In addition to the Oedipus situation, he now recognized that religion also arose from an overwhelming need for protection against the helpless and anxious condition into which man is thrown in life. This essay has also been criticized severely. Yet, strangely enough, its main theme is actually enjoying great popularity. Our culture, however, has drawn its own conclusions—contrary to Freud's and compatible with the traditional vindication of religious faith. Following the lead of William James's essay "The Will to Believe," perhaps the most influential work in popular theology, many writers have acknowledged that there is a great *need* for religion, because man is a weak and helpless being. But they have argued that, because the need is so great, religious beliefs must be true; whereas Freud argued that the beliefs are palpably false, but are accepted as true because they satisfy such deep needs. In either case, it is agreed that religious beliefs are so significant, and occupy a central place in the psychic economy, because they respond to powerful needs. But our culture has decided that, when such needs are at stake—"living, forced, and momentous options," as James called them—it is legitimate to think that the beliefs are true; or it is legitimate to cling to them regardless of whether they are true or false.

FREUD'S personal choice was a radical and, at times, a violent repudiation of this option. Why did he refuse to compromise on the issue, as so many others have done since in an effort to reconcile psychoanalysis and religion? Not because he did not appreciate the function religious beliefs perform on behalf of "psychic hygiene," in Jung's words. As early as 1909 he wrote to his Swiss associate, Oskar Pfister, a Protestant clergyman—in his characteristic mixture of irony and seriousness: "You are in the fortunate position of leading them [i.e., the patients] on to God . . . ; fortunate at least in the one respect that religious piety stifles neuroses. We no longer have this opportunity of settling this matter." Thus "it is much harder for us." Moreover, the long interior dialogue that Freud conducted with himself in *The Future of an Illusion,* while concluding with a moving affirmation of an enlightened, scientific rationalism, also shows the other side of his nature, which was fully cognizant of the psychic benefits bestowed by religion.

What tipped the scales in Freud's mind against religion were, I think, aside from his own childhood influences, two major considerations: (1) that religion had actually failed, that it had missed its unchallenged opportunity "for many thousands of years . . . to show what it can achieve" in improving the lot of man; (2) that the religious superstructure was incompatible with the dignity of the free man.

His denunciation of religion as "mental infantilism . . . and mass delusion" expressed Freud's passionate commitment to a Promethean image of man. Ultimately, psychoanalysis was more than an "instrument" for the cure of neuroses; it was also, Freud believed, a rational way of life leading to the eventual emancipation of man from any bondage and allegiance to powers other than his own. "Nor can religion keep its promises either. When the faithful find themselves reduced in the end to speaking of God's 'inscrutable decree,' they thereby avow that all that is left to them in their sufferings is unconditional submission as a last remaining consolation and source of happiness."

Religion thus appeared as a symbol of self-abasement and self-alienation. And Freud's struggle against religion was an attempt to wean mankind from the magic powers on which it had leaned during its prolonged childhood, to cut the umbilical cord alienating man from himself. The crucial issue was not, as Freud sometimes said it was, that religion provided nothing but substitute gratifications; he was more than willing to make room for such gratifications in the wish-world of art. The decisive difference was that aesthetic gratifi-

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cations still asserted and enhanced the autonomy of the self, whereas religion demanded "unconditional surrender" to a sovereignty beyond man. Freud agreed that religion was a way out of the human dilemma; but at a price that he was not willing to pay.

In the light of these reflections, it is perhaps premature to conclude that the basic ideas which shaped Freud's mind, and to which he assigned increasing significance in the "last phase" of his life, have gained general acceptance in our world. Appearances are deceptive. "Freudianism," to be sure, is an integral part of our culture, but in such a modified sense that one can almost hear Freud protesting from beyond the grave: "I am not a Freudian." The technical tools that he forged have been eagerly appropriated; the philosophical outlook at which he arrived is not shared even by many practicing analysts. As therapy, psychoanalysis is a faithful bedside companion; as a *Weltanschauung,* it is quite alien to the modern mind.

Of course, Freud may have been mistaken in his philosophical reflections about man and culture. But if he was right, at least in substantial parts of his general system of thought, it is not the present age but some future race of man that will vindicate his legacy.

## PEOPLE IN VOGUE

### JASCHA KESSLER

They have the right to smile, being patents
of the good life. How did they find the way
to casual health in exquisite tailoring,
like measures of men proposed by sages?

To the eye of discernment their repose
is no mere pose: forests have been ruined
to give them homes in our homes where they thrive
daily enduring our wonder and scorn.

Fumbling nature makes us hairy monsters,
handmedowns of matter and circumstance,
while those creatures conjure us with beauty
not godlike but as gods would like to be.

Possessing things they never use, they lounge
in Plato's ideal chairs. But as for us,
imperfect and uncomfortable blood,
our best rags perish while we eat our meals.

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Jascha Kessler is a young poet who is presently teaching English at Hamilton College, Clinton, New York. His verse has appeared in various periodicals.

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# THE STUDY OF MAN

## UNION DEMOCRACY AND THE PUBLIC GOOD

### *Do They Necessarily Coincide?*

**PAUL JACOBS**

FOR the past ten years sociologists and political scientists have been making intensive studies of trade union organization, a subject formerly the exclusive preserve of radicals, labor historians, and civil libertarians. One of the most important studies in this field to have been published recently is *Union Democracy*, an analysis of the International Typographical Union, by S. M. Lipset, M. Trow, and J. Coleman, all sociologists. Their work is significant not only for the light it sheds on the ITU, but also because it raises a fundamental question about trade union democracy and the public good in the United States today.

After a thorough examination of the ITU, the authors suggest in their conclusion that the ITU "may well serve as a touchstone against which the internal political processes of other unions, and of other voluntary groups, such as the American Legion or the American Medical Association, may be appraised and criticized"—even though they believe that "the fundamental requirements for democracy cannot be met most of the time in most unions or other voluntary groups," with their "normal" pattern of organizational oligarchy and bureaucratization. Although *Union Democracy* thus casts the ITU as "a model of the trade union in a democratic society," its authors do not discuss this subject at any great length: their chief concern is with those internal factors which have sustained democratic processes in the union. In this article, I should like first to review the conditions making for democracy in the ITU, and then go on to discuss this larger question: Is a democratically run union like the ITU, whose leaders and rank and file believe their function is restricted to job protection, *necessarily* more useful socially than unions which are autocratically managed?

FOR more than a half century, the ITU, a union whose jurisdiction claims all the composing rooms in the United States, has evaded the "iron law of organizational oligarchy" described in 1912 by Robert Michels. It has a unique two-party system, not found in any other national union in the United States. Its officials are comparatively low-salaried and more or less directly controlled from below, through regularly contested elections marked by a high degree of membership participation; democratic control is also exercised by referenda, through which important policy decisions are arrived at. *Union Democracy* analyzes the history of this two-party system; the behavior of the union members in and out of the shop; the way in which union leaders are recruited; and the reasons why their power over the

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THE sorry story of corruption and mismanagement in many unions has been unfolded in the nation's press in recent months, and the urgent need for union democracy has been emphasized anew. But does union democracy automatically promote union policies that benefit the general welfare? This widespread assumption is critically examined by PAUL JACOBS in his consideration of the study, *Union Democracy*, by S. M. Lipset, M. Trow, and J. Coleman, recently published by the Free Press (455 pp., $7.50). Mr. Jacobs contributes to the *New Republic*, *Reporter*, and other American magazines, as well as to the London *Economist*. He is Staff Administrator of the Trade Union Project of the Fund for the Republic and has worked for many years as a union representative for the American Federation of Labor and the CIO.



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union is not absolute and why the members are sufficiently concerned about the government of their union to keep it democratic.

The origin of the ITU's two-party system goes back to a period of economic crisis in the middle of the 19th century, when a secret society arose within the union, composed of the most militant and loyal members who banded together to resist employer attempts at blacklisting, to reinforce the union internally, and to compel the employers to accept union terms, working conditions, and wages. Even when the depression period of the 1870's had ended and the union's existence became fairly stable, the secret society continued to function, so as to prevent the union from falling into the hands of less militant members. Subsequently opposition to the secret society arose among union members outside the select group, who regarded it and its successors as political machines seeking to control the best paying jobs in the trade for themselves. Eventually the secret societies were forced to dissolve; but it was out of the struggle to make them do so that the open two-party system finally emerged. Today the two parties are firmly established within the union, although the issues now dividing them are quite different.

In recent times these differences have rarely been of a principled character. The bitter election struggles between the "ins" and "outs" have been fought mainly over the most efficient ways of administering the union and of gaining concessions from the employers. Contests over political questions not directly concerned with immediate economic demands have been uncommon, although where a political issue was directly related to the economic position of the union, as in the case of the Taft-Hartley Law, it was fairly bitterly disputed. One party within the union, the "Progressives," opposed the law, believing that it "threatened the very existence of the ITU, for it outlawed many practices which had existed in the industry since the turn of the century." Reflecting the control of the union by the "Progressives" since 1946, the ITU in the last decade has insisted that employers agree informally to continue practices forbidden by the law, and have conducted a number of major strikes to enforce this demand. But as the strikes continued and their cost to the union grew, the opposition party, the "Independents," made a campaign issue of them, and at present appear to be gaining ground.

Since 1900, ITU members have voted in more than 300 referenda on constitutional questions, major policy matters, assessments, convention dates, unemployment relief payments, the number of days a man may work, and a variety of other subjects. The authors believe that close membership control over a union through referenda is impossible except where there is a two-party system. They argue:

"In most organizations, union or non-union, it is assumed that the national convention of delegates elected by the members represents the wishes of the members. It is clear from the record of the conventions and the referenda in the ITU that this assumption need not be valid. A convention in fact usually represents the local leadership structure, and the local leaders who go to the . . . conventions may, and frequently do, have values and interests which are different from those whom they nominally represent. This gap is generally obscured by the absence of any means for the direct expression of the desires of the membership. Referenda provide such a means of expression, but *only when they operate within the context of an institutionalized party system.* Otherwise, as in plebiscitarian one-party states . . . they serve merely to legitimize the power and decisions of a ruling group. Although a large number of oligarchic unions have referenda, this has rarely resulted in the defeat of any administration proposal. In a context in which opposition and discussion of issues is not normal procedure, the average trade unionist can do little else but vote for the proposals of his permanent leaders."

In the ITU, the referendum-*cum*-two-party system has given the members great power over their officers. Thus the rank and file has been able to deny large salary increases to officials. "Since 1900, proposals for salary increases for international officers have been defeated 18 times out of 26." And further: "The ability of the members to limit the gap between their own salaries and that of their officers is probably a major factor sustaining the democratic system in the ITU, for it reduces the strain on ITU officers who return to the print shop following defeat."

I am inclined to think that Lipset and his co-authors go too far when they describe low salaries as "probably a major factor" in sustaining the democratic system in the ITU. Salaried officials, whatever their incomes, tend to perpetuate themselves as a group. In most

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unions the realistic alternative to defeat in office, understood by all contestants, is not "return to the shop," but a post with a national or state union federation, in government, or sometimes with management. Again, in most unions there are significant factors other than pay which cause officials to resist the return to the shop. Obviously social status is higher outside the shop than in it. Even on the lower levels of union hierarchy, the official has a good deal more status than the ordinary member. It is the union official, not the member, who sits on the Community Chest board, makes appeals for the Red Cross, and shares the platform with political leaders at campaign meetings. The authority given the official by virtue of his job is thus an important element in making him reluctant to return to shop. He has power, often an adequate substitute for money. He is treated politely when he visits the employer, and to the workers in the shop he also represents power because he is one of the few with the professional knowledge necessary to deal with the workers' problems in a highly complex industrial society.

Above all, the union official has freedom from the routine drudgery of the shop. He comes and goes almost as he pleases. He is outside, physically outside, eating in restaurants when almost everybody else is inside, sitting near a machine or in a locker room and taking from a lunch box the bologna sandwiches, cup cakes, slightly mashed banana, and cork-flavored coffee from a thermos. I am inclined to think that most union officials would prefer to hold their jobs, no matter what their salaries, although this certainly doesn't prevent them from trying to get wage increases for themselves whenever possible. Such perquisites of union office as attending conventions and conferences (always on an expense account) are clearly desirable. Even if salary differentials are low, as they are in the ITU, why should the union official want to return to the shop? Most union leaders would deny that they represent a class movement, and they do not consciously seek to rise by bringing that class to power. Rather, by performing an important function for their followers, do they seek to rise *through* their group to a level *above* it.

IN THE ITU, however, there is evidence that the printers have viewed themselves, and consequently their union, in a different light. It is this outlook that is important in the maintenance of democratic processes. The most striking feature of union life in the ITU is the fact that it revolves around a great number of communal activities. The authors point out that in most large printers' locals (such as those in New York, Chicago, and San Francisco), there are social clubs, lodges, sports clubs, veterans' groups, and many others. On the international level, there are three sports organizations, for baseball, golf, and bowling. These hold annual tournaments to which participants come from all parts of North America. The authors have this to say:

"The formal functions of most of the groups are primarily social. Some, at different times, have maintained regular headquarters, where men could gather to talk or play cards, chess, or checkers and get something to eat and drink. Some are primarily sports organizations, though they may run an occasional affair, such as dances. Still others, such as the typographical societies, link their social affairs to benevolent activities. Some have brought together printers who are members of the same ethnic or religious group, such as the Dublin Society or the Jewish Printers. Union Label Clubs have enabled printers living in the same neighborhoods to come together to further union objectives. Common past experiences have been the basis for groups such as war veterans or former employees of defunct newspapers. In this bewildering variety, trade and skill distinctions are another basis for grouping. Fraternal orders, such as the Masons, have also been the basis for printers organizations.

"Often within a large single printing plant, such as the large metropolitan newspapers, microscopic versions sprout up of the groups that exist in the occupation as a whole. Veterans' posts, lodges, social and athletic clubs composed of workers in the same plant are common. Some of the smaller shops or shifts often constitute themselves extra vocational or social or recreational units.

"Until fairly recently, regular weekly and bi-weekly newspapers were published, devoted largely to reporting the activities of the union and the various sub-groups. Like the clubs, these newspapers (and there have been at least three major ones) had no official relationship to the union and were published by private individuals. The most recent of these in New York, the *Typographical Forum* (1932 to 1943), reached a peak circulation of 3,500,

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or more than one-third of the working members of the union. It ceased publication during the war, because overtime work did not leave enough free time to put out a newspaper.

"Social clubs, organized leisure activities such as bowling leagues and union newspapers are, of course, not unique to the printers, although we know of no other occupation which has as many and diverse forms of organized extra-vocational activities as the ITU. What must be significant about the printers occupational community is that it *developed without any formal connection* with the union. The various benevolent organizations, newspapers, social clubs, athletic teams and lodges have for the most part been organized by working printers in their spare time, by men who felt the need to engage in such activities with other printers.

"The formal community of printers clubs is paralleled by an informal one, that is, large numbers of printers spend a considerable amount of their leisure time with other printers. In interviews, many printers reported that their best friends are other printers, that they regularly visit the homes of other printers, that they often meet in bars, go fishing together, or see each other in various places before and after work."

It thus appears that printers comprise what *Union Democracy* describes as an "occupational community," in which the union is only *one* of the elements giving cohesion to the community as a whole. Family relationships are another—many printers come from families of printers—while other factors heightening the sense of community are the comparatively high economic and craft status of the trade, as well as working conditions (much of printing is done at night) which encourage members to spend much of their leisure time together.

A somewhat weaker case is made by the authors for the structure of the printing industry serving as a factor to sustain democracy within the ITU. The industry is made up of small and medium-sized shops, with looser work discipline than is common in most enterprises. The on-the-job union organization is called the chapel, and its chairman is the counterpart of the union steward elsewhere. Because of the relative simplicity of ITU contracts, the chapel chairman has greater authority than is usual in most unions, and the chapel itself is a fairly autonomous body, both factors tending to hinder the development of a bureaucratic union administration outside the shop. Moreover, there are no wide differentials between either skills or wage rates in printing, and thus the ITU is more nearly a community of equals than other unions, with no special highly paid elite group of workers from whom its officers are drawn.

Yet there are other unions where conditions in this respect are somewhat similar, but which have developed in extremely undemocratic fashion. The explanation, according to Lipset, Trow, and Coleman, is that "the existence of democracy in the ITU is largely the result of the convergence of a set of events, each of which contributes to, or detracts from, the continuing stability of the system. If some one of them in the early history had turned the other way, then present-day democracy in the union would have been less likely. The existence of democracy at present may be likened to a series of successive outcomes of casting dice, dice which are with each favorable throw more heavily loaded toward a favorable outcome on the next throw."

Now if we accept the authors' view of the ITU as a model of union democracy, and their analysis of the factors which have produced and maintained democracy in the ITU, then the prospects for the labor movement as a whole are dim indeed. It is extremely unlikely that the factors which originally brought about and now sustain democracy in the ITU, will ever be duplicated in other unions. No other union in America shows any signs of developing two parties, certainly a key element in the ITU system, and few unions can keep the salary costs of their officers at the level of the ITU, since so many must maintain large administrative staffs. Likewise few other trades have the sense of craft and occupational community characteristic of the printers. It is difficult to conceive of an auto worker wanting his sons to work in a Detroit plant. He is more likely to send them to college, if possible, and thus rescue them from the drudgery which he suffers.

Thus if the ITU is, as *Union Democracy* states, "deviant" from the normal pattern of U.S. labor organizations, we must examine realistic alternatives to its peculiar structure. To do this, we must first of all question the assertion that the "ITU stands as a model of the trade union in a democratic society."

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WHAT kind of union is a "model" in a democratic society? One like the ITU which has democratic forms and which in fact conducts its affairs democratically? May it not be that before we can characterize such a union as a "model," we must also examine it from the viewpoint of how it furthers the *values* of a democratic society? Even if we assume that the function of a union can be justifiably limited to raising wages and improving working conditions, we may still have difficulty in accepting the ITU as a model. It is worth remembering that, with practically no democracy of the ITU type, the Teamsters Union has brought about great improvements in working conditions and wages for its members. As an economic instrument it has probably been more efficient than the ITU. Indeed, in purely economic terms, the members of the ITU may well have paid too high a price for their independence.

Nor does lack of democracy necessarily relate to the question of corruption in unions, as witness the International Ladies' Garment Workers'. Here an autocratically led union is almost completely free from any large-scale financial corruption. Thus the protection of union treasuries, at least, appears not necessarily a function of democracy but one of proper methods of accounting.

Regarded from the viewpoint of society, the ITU presents a picture very different from that which it offers to its members. If we believe that the community should continually strive to realize the ideals of a democratic society, the ITU appears as a conservative, and sometimes even a reactionary group, indifferent to political ideals, generally isolated from the socially conscious elements of the labor movement, and tolerant of work practices as dubious economically and socially as, for example, "bogus."

"Bogus" is an apt name for a practice which the union contends was originated by the newspaper publishers but is now prescribed in ITU contracts. Whenever a newspaper receives and prints an advertisement already set up in plate or in a papier-mâché matrix form—the normal procedure when the same advertisement runs in more than one newspaper—it must be reset by hand or machine in the newspaper's own composing room. A proof is run off, checked for errors, and then destroyed, without ever having been printed, and the set type is then remelted. Some editorial matter supplied in matrix or plate form must also be reset in the same way. In New York and other cities, all "bogus" advertisements must be set within seven days after the original matrix has been printed. Though bogus is handled by regular employees at straight time rates, often "extras" must be hired to "catch up" on back bogus which has accumulated simply because no men were available who could be used to do it within the prescribed time limit.

Many ITU members refuse to do "bogus" work, even though the union insists on contract observance and attempts to enforce it. Some ITU officials privately agree that the practice is bad; yet the two-party democratic system of the ITU helps to keep "bogus" and other such archaic practices in existence. There is no doubt that if the leaders of one ITU "party" were seriously to call for the abolition of "bogus," the opposition group would seize upon this as a campaign issue. Since there is no tradition of serious political debate within the union, neither "party" is willing to embark upon such a risky course. (Incidentally, it would be interesting to determine the effect upon printers—as craftsmen—of doing work which they know in advance is useless to society and will only be destroyed.)

To take another instance of its relation to the community at large: the ITU in New York City, together with the printing employers, until recently played an important role in preventing permanent political party registration from being enacted into law. In the absence of such permanent registration, all voters had to register anew each year, thus cutting down the size of the vote and lessening whatever influence labor might have had in the elections. The union's justification for its opposition to permanent registration was that printing new registration lists for each election provided its members with employment. (Needless to say, the printing employers were equally in favor of renewing their profits at each election.)

THUS we see that it is entirely possible for a democratic union to carry on practices which may seriously conflict with the interests of the community at large, or even the remainder of the labor movement. Like any other organization, the democratic union, if not restrained internally by a substantive commitment to democratic ideals, must often be curbed by conflicting or restraining forces outside it.

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In this context, the contrast between the ITU and the International Ladies' Garment Workers' Union becomes significant. No candid observer of the labor movement would describe the ILGWU as a democratic union. It is in fact totally dominated by its president and secretary-treasurer, David Dubinsky.* Yet no one thinks it odd that Dubinsky—always described as a modern labor statesman—should behave, procedurally, towards the ILGWU in somewhat the same way as the autocratic John L. Lewis behaves towards the miners or a building trades official towards his union. Labor journalists rarely analyze the dictatorial manner in which he runs the union. Newspaper accounts of ILGWU conventions dwell at length on details of speeches, pageants, and testimonials, but fail to give any discussion of the manner in which the officers are chosen. There are only dim memories of the days when there was an opposition candidate to the official slate. It is common knowledge that Dubinsky has already selected his own successor and made his choice known to the union hierarchy. It is thus obvious that although there is in substance great difference between the practices of the ILGWU and those of the Teamsters, the forms through which both organizations operate have much in common.

Yet Dubinsky *is* a labor statesman and the ILGWU, albeit internally undemocratic (at least on the international union level), is in many ways far superior to the ITU, to say nothing of the Teamsters. Viewed in the context of society as a whole, Dubinsky's policy decisions often appear motivated by considerations other than economic interests of the members; they are clearly based on a broader social philosophy. Obviously, then, there is a contradiction, or at least a confusion in terms, when the ITU is said to be a "model," unless it is also true that a union like the ILGWU can likewise be considered a model of a different kind. Presumably the authors would agree that the existence of union democracy by itself is not necessarily a guarantee that the union's role vis-à-vis the community, the labor movement, or even its own members, will be a healthy one. A union like the ITU—with its closed-off internal structure, not easily susceptible to pressures from the outside world—may very well end by perpetuating the standards of the group—not all of them equally desirable.

IF ONE starts from the real condition of the American labor movement, rather than the idealized image which appears to affect the thinking of many observers, one must accept the probability that, for a variety of reasons, membership participation in the affairs of the union will in general continue to be extremely low—about an average of 3 per cent—except during crisis periods. This is due to a number of factors. First, the variable nature of American industry obviously affects participation. Workers who are scattered over a large area find it more difficult to attend meetings than those concentrated in one locality. Again, nationwide contracts, effective as they are, limit the members' areas of decision-making. The size of the industrial unit, whether a local union is composed of members from one plant or a number of plants—all these and other factors affect membership participation. In addition, one must also give consideration to a factor generally characteristic of all American unions: namely, that the members do not choose to take a more active part because of their limited concept of the function of their unions.

American unions have not on the whole developed as instruments of political expression for large groups in the community as they did in Europe. Thus the commitment of most union members to their organization tends to be narrow and shallow, not much different in degree from that given to any one of the vast number of organizations which vie for the loyalty and support of Americans. In the eyes of its members, the purpose of the union appears restricted to that of a service organization—getting higher wages and better working conditions for its members. The leaders of American unionism in general share this view, even though it may not match the reality of the situation. For although it is *not* a political instrument, the average union is also no longer merely an organization serving its members' economic interests. In reality the unions have become part of the machinery of American industrial life, sharing in important areas of

*A story (perhaps apocryphal) that causes ILGWU people to double up with laughter concerns the liberal-minded lady who attended her first ILGWU convention, at the conclusion of which she was introduced to the president. "Congratulations, Mr. Dubinsky," she said. "For what?" he asked puzzled. "Why," she replied, "upon your re-election, of course!"

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managerial decision-making. Labor-management relations and such matters as pension and seniority rights, which have evolved through collective bargaining, now affect the life conditions of both members and non-members. Thus we seem to be confronted with a situation where most of the participants in the labor movement, active or inactive, leaders and members alike, do not fully understand the nature of their own work. They think it is one thing; it is actually another. And this gap between understanding and actuality is probably one of the reasons why the American labor movement has not been able to develop a new outlook consonant with democratic values.

In its early days, the American labor movement received an infusion of European socialist ideology, but in the context of a generally expanding and socially mobile society, that element grew weaker. Utopianism was replaced by craft protectionism and craft rights were jealously fought over and guarded. With unions successfully raising economic standards, the American working class ceased to view itself as a whole and became fragmented into economic units often warring with each other for long periods of time. During the depression of the 30's, a kind of social ideology was provided for the unions by the New Deal, which expressed itself through the formation of the CIO. For a brief spell there was again an infusion of political awareness, but the rapid development of the war economy, coupled with the realization by the business community that it could recognize unions and still maintain high profits, weakened management's hitherto bitter opposition to unions, an opposition which if persisted in might have converted the union institution into a labor movement.

All that remains at present is the inevitable current moving the trade unions toward bureaucratization and oligarchy, a current accelerated by the desire of the government to maintain the kind of stable, responsible labor leadership which promotes harmony in labor-management relations. Unfortunately, stability and harmony often bring with it inertia and a loss of freedom. In the face of ever-growing corporate enterprise, matched by equally large unions, the problem of maintaining internal democracy in unions, without sacrificing their efficiency, is a formidable one. The development of a broader social outlook on the part of the unions is likewise a most serious matter. But the examination of questions such as these is clearly beyond the scope imposed upon their work by the authors of *Union Democracy*.

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# LETTERS FROM READERS

## Must Desegregation Be Imposed by Force?

To the Editor of Commentary:

In Professor Woodward's article ("The Great Civil Rights Debate," October) on the civil rights debate of last summer, there appeared the following:

"'It is time to march forward,' announced Senator Wayne Morse of Oregon, 'toward the goal of social, economic, and political equality for all Americans, irrespective of the color of their skins.' But the Senator hastily followed up this bugle call for advance with a roll of drums for retreat: 'However, this forward movement must be orderly, constitutionally lawful, devoid of carpetbagging and strong-armed tactics. It must be based upon appeals to reason and the instinctive sense of all patriotic Americans to fair play and moral justice.'"

Professor Woodward finds a paradox in those sentences which does not in fact exist. Here are the two complete paragraphs from which he quoted, which followed my discussion of Part III of the civil rights bill:

"I have always said, and repeat today, that I am not an over-nighter in the advocacy of reforms for America's racial problem, neither am I a retreatist. This is no time in the Senate of the United States or throughout America to issue commands for civil-rights retreat, I care not how eminent the general who issues the order, even though he may occupy the White House. Neither is it the time to mark time. It is time to march forward toward the goal of social, economic, and political equality for all Americans, irrespective of the color of their skins.

"However, this forward movement must be orderly, constitutionally lawful, devoid of carpetbagging and strong-armed tactics. It must be based upon appeals to reason and the instinctive sense of all patriotic Americans to fair play and moral justice. It must be strengthened by a determination on the part of the federal government to enforce federal rights by fair procedures that will guarantee a heritage of government by law. It must be buttressed by a determination to maintain the integrity of our federal judicial system which, subject only to check by constitutional amendment, is not only the receptacle but the guardian of the constitutional rights of every American, irrespective of the color of his skin."

I do not believe Professor Woodward cares to contend that protection of the constitutional rights of racial minorities should be carried out by means that are *dis*orderly, contrary to constitutional principles, destructive of the rights of others, and which disregard the processes of democratic government, of which legislative procedures are a part.

As he indicated, my refusal to go along with the parliamentary maneuver devised to take up H.R. 6127 in the Senate caused some surprise, especially among the very people who are most devoted to fair procedure, whether it be on the Senate floor, before a Congressional investigating committee, or in a police court. Although my name was included initially on a statement of intent to by-pass the Judiciary Committee when H.R. 6127 came to the Senate, I immediately took the Senate floor to withdraw from that statement when I had thought through the implications of such a procedure.

That by-passing the Committee did the cause of civil rights no good is demonstrated by the successive defeats its supporters suffered on the floor. If the votes were sufficient to put the bill directly on the calendar, they were also sufficient to send the bill to committee with a directive for a report on a day certain.

As a matter of fact, my position throughout the civil rights debate was entirely consistent with the simple theory that the Constitution should be enforced. I pointed out that Part III would have strengthened the Federal courts in bringing about equal protection of the law and an end to segregation. I voted against its removal. I spoke at length against the jury-trial amendment, and voted against it. When the Senate bill was stripped of Part III and the judicial enforcement of constitutional rights weakened by the jury-trial amendment, I voted against the final bill.

As for the burden of Woodward's analysis, that the division among Americans concerning colored citizens is so profound that only the most painful progress toward equality can be made, I believe he overstates the issue. Pro-



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fessor Handlin's estimate in the November COMMENTARY ("Civil Rights After Little Rock") that more resolution and less compromise would bring a quicker settlement impresses me as being far more accurate.

It has been one hundred and eighty-one years since the Declaration of Independence expressed our conviction that all men are created equal; it has been eighty-nine years since the 14th Amendment required equal protection of the law; it has been three years since the Supreme Court applied this to public schools and struck down segregation. That is a long time for a free people to acclimate themselves to a principle.

What is needed is a firmness to see that the Constitution is carried out, not only by the courts but on the part of our executives and in our legislative halls. I think the dilemma will prove less formidable than presently is assumed if the civil rights forces will but demonstrate that they do not mean to retreat from the Constitution. And our progress will be faster if we are not only firm, but fair.

(Senator) WAYNE MORSE
Washington, D. C.

PROFESSOR WOODWARD *writes:*

No friend of civil rights who has followed Senator Morse's record of thirteen years in the Senate can doubt his sincerity or fail to admire his courage. Nor can anyone read the full twelve pages of his speech in the *Congressional Record* from which he and I quote without being convinced that he is a consistent champion of Negro rights. And certainly, he is no "overnighter in the advocacy of reforms for America's racial problem."

I did not quote Senator Morse to accuse him of inconsistency. On the contrary, I said his claim to consistency in the civil rights debate was stronger than that of liberal weeklies, labor unions, and civil rights groups who were more willing to compromise. One of the most valuable and attractive qualities of his liberalism has been his devotion to procedural as well as substantive safeguards for civil rights. In last summer's debate he stood up courageously in defense of safeguards for legislative processes that were under attack by his own liberal colleagues. There will be great need for Morse's principles and for his devotion and courage in debates that are to come.

My purpose in quoting Senator Morse was to illustrate both the hopes that urge on the demand for immediate desegregation and the misgivings that plague those hopes. Neither of us approves of "carpetbagging and strong-armed tactics," and both of us prefer methods that are "orderly, constitutionally lawful." Yet we thoroughly agree that the movement for racial justice must not be disbanded by the threat of disorder, frustrated by constitutional pettifoggery, nor intimidated by mobs and demagogues.

Senator Morse read into my article a despair and defeatism that is not there. I agree with him and with Professor Handlin that now is the time for firmness and resolution. It is perfectly clear that nothing but defeat can result from compromise with blackmailers and that the sort of "moderation" that amounts to a confession of weakness and an invitation to aggression must be abandoned.

It is not defeatism and despair, however, to face our difficulties realistically. In the ten states of the old Confederacy apart from Texas there are more than thirteen hundred school districts. In the three and a half years since May 1954, only fifteen of the thirteen hundred have been desegregated, and those on a token basis, involving usually a handful of Negro children, in three states. The question is how this process can be speeded up and how compliance can be given more than token substance.

The answer is not an army jeep full of frightened children under armed escort or school corridors patrolled by troops. If that becomes the image of desegregation in the popular mind, or the model of procedure, the cause is surely lost. The American people will abandon it as they abandoned the first experiment in reconstruction. That can happen.

Firmness and resolution and willingness to use force to uphold the Constitution are necessary, *but they are not enough*. The active cooperation of a sufficient number of responsible Southern white people is absolutely necessary to make this movement succeed in any meaningful and lasting way. These people must be encouraged and protected. The real defeatist among the civil rights forces is the man who denies that there are any such Southerners and holds that desegregation will have to be imposed by superior force from outside.

## Art and Movies

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Manny Farber in "Underground Films" (November) attempts to establish himself as a Mickey Spillane of movie criticism by exalting the action film with its "twelve-year-old's adventure story plot and endless palpitating movement" as the most significant contribution to cinematic art in modern times. He shuns, as a good Neanderthal critic should, the "polishing, hypocrisy, bragging, fake educating that goes on in serious art" and disdains "films that

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bear the label of ART in every inch of their reelage." Thus, the impression is successfully conveyed that no red-blooded American should ever be guilty of associating with ART—that undefined evil.

Farber's postured hard-boiled views seem strangely out of place in a soft-boiled magazine like COMMENTARY. That art has anything to do with the deepest and most intense efforts of men to deal with the meaning and significance of human experience seems beyond the ken of Mr. Farber. We may leave him with his addiction for action films with their "outward appearance of junk jewelry," filled with "pan-fried domestic sights" and peopled with "brassy cheapsters." Those who understand will know better. No photographic tricks or surface pseudo-realism can atone for the intellectual, spiritual, and emotional vacuum of these films.

HARVEY EINBINDER

New York City

## "Judaism in Northrup"

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

The wise and perceptive commentary that one finds in Evelyn N. Rossman's "Judaism in Northrup" (November) leads this reader to wonder about the wisdom and perception of the "Jewish leaders" in these new suburban communities that are not "Jewish" in character and structure, yet boast of an over-active and multi-disciplined arena of Jewish organizations.

To the author, and the many other anonymous and public critics of suburban Judaism, I pose several basic questions.

1. Don't you expect too much in the way of understanding, participation, and dedication from these people who have either never known or fled the influences and moral ties of Jewish family and community life?

2. Why should we assume that the completely restyled and reassessed Jewish institutions, ideas, and ceremonials of the Northrups —in the guise of sophistication, modernism, and superficiality—should satisfy the basic yearnings of man for purpose, direction, and meaning?

3. Should we expect anything but confusion, apathy, and frustration from these people whose rabbis and synagogues have been too preoccupied with trivia to serve as beacons in the direction of basic Jewish truths and values?

4. Is it not true that a major factor in the influencing of the Jews of another generation toward communal responsibility was their genuine desire to prepare for the next generation and perpetuate their own network of beliefs, customs, and values? What is it that Northrupians wish to perpetuate, their social insecurity, their hybrid Judaism, their frustrations?

The history of our people has answers to these questions, and it has shown that Jewish community life *per se,* and indeed the very essence of Jewish family life, is bankrupt and meaningless when divorced from the basic "motifs" and fundaments of Judaism. The person who acknowledges and accepts the premises of our time-honored Torah-approach to life finds meaning and purpose and fulfillment in his personal, family, and community affairs.

A sad commentary on 20th-century Jews is that, lacking this *"aleph* basis of *Yiddishkeit,"* they try the intricate and deceptive short-cuts of forums, lectures, seminars, and institutional involvement and hope to find the meaning, warmth, identity, and pride evident in the Judaism of their mothers and fathers.

(Rabbi) SAMUEL I. COHEN

Long Island Zionist Youth Commission
Kew Gardens, N. Y.

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

I enjoyed Mrs. Rossman's comments on suburban living. Perhaps my reactions to eight years of rural life might help her crystallize her own vague yearnings toward Judaism.

Western New York (my home) is a predominately Anglo-Saxon Protestant society. The section I live in has barely enough Jews for the required *minyan,* and *kashruth* is merely a dream. Here, too, anti-Semitism seems to be merely a dictionary term. Despite this, I find my own Judaism strengthened rather than weakened.

First, we must agree, that we Jews have profited greatly from America's many virtues. The material things of life are readily available to us, we are pogrom-free, our children attend secular schools and join interdenominational organizations. But, I think, we have also suffered from "Americanization." We have the same need to "conform" and "adjust" that our neighbors do, we share the same unease in the presence of an "egghead," we are eager to accept our religion on a "happy-pill" basis, and we are hungry for material success.

None of these philosophies squares with Judaism. Conform? To what? Adjust? Where? Is the Jewish religion with its stern emphasis on ethics a "happy" one? Has our history been a successful one? What of our traditional love for learning, our disregard of material failures?

Let us keep our discontent, I say. Let us conform to our ancient heritage, remember our past. Where else can the Western world find a greater reservoir of fortitude in the face of

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overwhelming odds than among us? And a purer love of intellectualism than in us?

As Jews we can help our country face its greatest test. By our differences, we can help the majority, reeling under apparent American failure. We know the right will triumph—but at the price of great personal sacrifice and hard work. We must make our voices heard. We must show our neighbors that love of learning can be a good thing, individual protest a great catalyst in a too complacent society.

CLARA WISHNER

Helmuth, New York

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Mrs. Rossman's "Judaism in Northrup" poses the question which I have been asking myself for some years. I am afraid that I too have not the courage to say "no." My job—and, more important, my family support—now commit me to being a "professional Jew." I can't quit; I am too old to start in some other line of work and have no training for such a changed occupation.

There must be thousands of Jews who do read books and who do reflect and who feel, as I do, that religion—any religion, not just Judaism—is a kind of poetic guide to life, that "God" is a profound but rather vague metaphor, and that Jewish customs represent folkways which may be convenient or dear to us for various reasons but which are, fundamentally, merely fixed dietary and social prejudices of varying importance.

At one time, I was active in Reform Judaism, lectured, and wrote for Jewish periodicals. Now I just "glide along." Reform Judaism seemed to promise an "out" by developing in the direction of adaptation of age-old Jewish ways to scientific and artistic modes of living and thinking. Now it has swung back to aping folk-ritual and catering to the mores of largely uncritical masses of well-to-do middle class mixers.

When all is said and done, of course, I admit that if I were even twenty years younger and not tied to a job and responsible for a family, I might not say "no" to Judaism. Perhaps what I would do would be simply to forget about it—a feat not hard to accomplish even now since Judaism-as-religion is already so inconsequential in my life that protest seems not worth the effort.

Since several rabbis will probably write, if this should be printed, to remind me that "others" won't let me forget my Jewishness, let me stress here that I am not now concerned, nor will be in the future, with what "others" think about my faith or the lack of it.

ANONYMOUS

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Here are some thoughts inspired by Mrs. Rossman's article:

Her community seems typical of the mushrooming of latter-day Jewish institutionalization in the United States. Everywhere this seems to be largely composed of "fallen away" Jews who have banded together again to provide Jewish education for their children and to seek identity and meaning in their own tradition. Their practice varies all the way from merely paying temple dues and sending children to Sunday school to keeping kosher and refusing to ride on Saturday (although the latter probably never did really "fall away"). In between are an infinite combination of different religious practices. For example, some will eat ham in restaurants but not at home, some will eat bacon but not fresh pork, some will give Christmas presents but not have a Christmas tree, some will have a tree but no wreath on the door, and so on, *ad infinitum*.

Why should members of the congregation feel discomfort or guilt over this, when the rabbis, from Reform to Orthodox, are in complete disagreement over what constitutes approved ritual behavior? Yet it is all Judaism, and some of it wonderful Judaism, in spite of this.

Personally, I am grateful in the extreme to have moved from a complete repudiation of Judaism and all religion in my adolescence to a profound reverence for the Jewish tradition in my middle age. Its changes and variations, both past and present, disturb me not at all. As a people we have been and still are magnificent, and we will persist for a long time to come whether we keep the Sabbath holy or work in our gardens.

As a religion, Judaism to my mind leaves something to be desired. History and myth are stressed to the detriment of the personal relationship of the individual to God. We read and repeat endlessly that Moses and the other ancient prophets spoke with God. But thousands of years ago is far too remote for conversations with God to be truly vital today. Are there not those, rabbis and laymen alike, who speak with God today? Can we not hear about them in our synagogues and religious writings? Or has Judaism totally relegated revelation to the category of myth? I have this feeling, and yet the direct religious experience, the kind that William James describes, is as overwhelming in its magnificence today as it was three thousand years ago. God speaks to man through himself and He should not speak in the same language in the light of present-day knowledge and experience as that in which He spoke to the ancient believers in miracles;

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yet speak He must, else He is not a living God but merely an ancient myth, however wise and beautiful were His words in days gone by, however much of the wisdom is still applicable today.

Perhaps it is presumptuous of a comparative religious illiterate like myself to write this way. Yet I have sat through all kinds of Jewish services, and in recent years even been moved by them. I have praised God and supplicated God; yet He has remained remote—the God of Abraham, Jacob, Isaac, and Moses. His eye has not been on this sparrow—me—not during services or through any experience of Judaism. On the very rare occasions when He has conversed with me, it has been an intensely private experience with no relation to a religious atmosphere. Judaism in precept and practice is the "good" life—this I firmly believe. If one lives according to its teachings, whether Orthodox or Reform, one will be a kindly, moral, courageous individual. But one will not necessarily feel the presence of God within oneself: the infinitely comforting and joyous conviction that oneself as an individual is of the utmost importance—not just to one's nearest beloved—but to the very pattern of life—to God. This, it seems to me, is the most essential thing religion should give, and this by their own admission is what Judaism has failed to give great numbers of its adherents in the U.S., 1957.

I have wandered far afield, but I think Mrs. Rossman's uncertainties and dissatisfactions with her Jewish community stem largely from this lack and not from the tug of war between individuals, organizations, and varieties of religious practice. Perhaps there are many, many Jews who feel this closeness with God; if so, I am either not fortunate enough to know them or they do not talk to me about it. On the other hand, I know very many of them who keep a tenuous hold on their religion because somehow it seems the thing to do, but are either agnostic or religious in so vague a way that it holds no significance for their daily living.

JANE K. SCHWARTZ

Washington, D. C.

MRS. ROSSMAN *writes:*

For me, Jewishness refers to values, even more than to religion. I imagine that these values that I'm conscious of are a product of Jewish upbringing and history. It may be that this is an illusion, that I'm simply the product of particular parents and grandparents and environment, but I doubt it. It's difficult to describe what I mean by values, because so often the difference between Jewish and other values are quantitative as well as qualitative. Yet I think that Judaism at its best can make life possible and desirable. It can lead to maturity rather than a lifetime of childhood; to responsibility rather than apathy; and to great pleasures (*nachus, fargenigen*) in place of "fun." There are surely other ways to develop "values," but it would seem that no tremendous success has so far been achieved in doing so in America or anywhere else, as far as I know.

If Jewishness can continue to foster understanding and a serious (ultimately religious) attitude toward life, then it's worth the time and work it demands. If it cannot, then it will not be missed.

## Apology

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

By an unforgivable blunder I have done an injury to a scholar whose work I hold in the highest regard. In the process of transferring the introductory note to the selection from the Testament of Joseph in the November "Cedars of Lebanon" from a draft of a chapter on Greek Romances in a book I am writing, I omitted reference to the documentation. The note in my book reads: "These relationships were recognized and worked out in detail by Martin Braun in his *History and Romance in Graeco-Oriental Literature* (Oxford, Blackwell, 1938), 44-93. Previously Braun had demonstrated the affinities of the Joseph story in Josephus (Antiquities 2:39-59) with the practices of Hellenistic historiography; see his *Griechischer Roman und hellenistische Geschichtsschreibung* (Frankfurter Studien zur Religion und Kultur der Antike, 6: Frankfurt am Main, 1934), 23-117." I offer my heartfelt apologies to Dr. Braun, to COMMENTARY, and to its readers.

MOSES HADAS

New York City

## Morris Raphael Cohen

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

With a view to editing the correspondence of the late philosopher Morris Raphael Cohen, I am collecting letters by or concerning him, and other memorabilia.

I should deeply appreciate hearing from anyone possessing materials or information pertaining thereto.

LEONORA COHEN ROSENFIELD

3749 Chesapeake St., N.W.
Washington 16, D. C.

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# BOOKS IN REVIEW

## From the Lower Depths*

EDOUARD RODITI

NARRATIVES, novels, and poems about the world of the German concentration camps have proved far less popular in West Germany than exposures of the horrors of war on the Eastern front, or accounts of Soviet prisoners-of-war and forced-labor camps. During the early years of the Allied occupation, a few books about the concentration camps did indeed achieve a certain notoriety in Germany. Since 1948, however, the tide has turned. Even so noted an anti-Nazi publicist as Eugen Kogon, one-time camp inmate and author of *Der S.S. Staat* ("The SS State"), is reported to have stated that he would now hesitate to antagonize his readers by reprinting that brutal analysis of the concentration camp system without some cuts and qualifications.

Most commercial publishers in West Germany have become even more squeamish about the subject. Nor does the unprecedented success of the German edition of *The Diary of Anne Frank* prove in any way that the publishers are wrong, and that their reading public is actually more eager to face the facts than they believe it to be. An extensive correspondence published in recent issues of the Berlin monthly *Der Monat* reveals a different picture. The German-born American journalist Norbert Muhlen had interpreted the cult of Anne Frank (in an article published in *Der Monat*) as proof of West Germany's moral recovery from the corruption of Nazidom. In an avalanche of letters to the editor, many of the magazine's readers, representing the cream of West German intellectual opinion, took an opposed view. They pointed out that the very choice of Anne Frank—whose account of persecution stops dramatically when the horrors of arrest, deportation, and extermination are about to begin—proves that most Germans are still unwilling to face the facts of Nazi terror.

The discussion of Muhlen's provocative article finally culminated, a couple of months ago, in the publication of a letter from an Israeli reader who had known Anne Frank before she had been forced to live in hiding in Amsterdam, and had then chanced to meet her again, a doomed and hopeless wraith, in Bergen-Belsen, shortly before her death. I myself observed, on various occasions in Amsterdam last summer, large numbers of German pilgrims haunting the house where Anne Frank had lived in hiding. To me they scarcely seemed to represent a cross section of West German opinion, but rather a widespread individual neurosis that expresses itself mainly in a sense of alienation in contemporary society, not in any awareness of responsibility for crimes committed by that society. Still, it is against this strange background of the German success of Anne Frank's testimony that recent German concentration camp literature should be interpreted.

The Hamburg publishers of *Mahnmal,* the concentration camp lyrics of Ilse Blumenthal-Weiss, deserve praise, even if the financial risks involved by the publication of this slim volume have been considerably reduced by semi-official sponsorship and grants. Conventional as the poetry and sentiments of Ilse Blumenthal-Weiss may be, they are still likely to shock and antagonize many German readers. In America, a well-established tradition of experimental poetry exists, and such verse would be dismissed by serious critics as well-mean-

*A review of *Mahnmal, Gedichte aus dem KZ,* by Ilse Blumenthal-Weiss, Christian Wegner Verlag, die Mainzer Reihe (Hamburg); *Ferien am Waldsee, Erinnerungen eines Ueberlebenden,* by Carl Laszlo, Verlag "Gute Schriften" (Basel); *Tanguy,* by Michel del Castillo, Editions Julliard (Paris); and *La Guitare,* by Michel del Castillo, Editions Julliard (Paris).



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ing doggerel; in Germany, however, experimental and original poetry is sadly lacking, and the work of Ilse Blumenthal-Weiss has been quite favorably reviewed, though often on account of its political significance rather than for its literary merits.

Carl Laszlo's *Ferien am Waldsee* ("Vacation at the Forest Lake"), a brief and factual account of the author's years in Auschwitz, earned no such acclaim. Rejected by every West German publisher to whom it had been submitted, it was finally brought out in Switzerland, was scarcely reviewed at all in Germany, and has sold pitifully few copies there. Yet *Ferien am Waldsee* picks up Anne Frank's tragic account just about where she was forced to abandon her diary, and its Hungarian Jewish author, at the time of his arrest and deportation, appears to have only just escaped being "processed" as one of those adolescent prisoners who were almost always exterminated on their arrival in Auschwitz. Laszlo's account was written ten full years after his liberation, as an attempt to assess the emotions that so many unbearable memories might still arouse in him. Unlike most concentration camp literature, it avoids both the conventional self-pity of the Blumenthal-Weiss lyrics and the uncritical indignation that has marred most of the earlier memoirs written by shocked intellectuals who suddenly found themselves lumped together with common-law criminals and subjected to the same inhuman treatment.

It is indeed high time to realize that the horrors of Auschwitz (with the exception of the so-called "scientific" experiments on prisoners and the actual gas-chambers) were not only similar to those of Soviet forced-labor camps, but also resembled those of penal settlements in some colonial areas of the Western world. Carl Laszlo, now a militant Dadaist anarchist in Switzerland, considers the dubious merits of all established authority with equal skepticism and sees but differences of degree between the compulsions exerted by the less tyrannical governments in our age and the atrocities committed by the more criminal. Nor is Laszlo's evaluation of human nature at all optimistic. His accounts of violence, betrayal, and brutal self-interest among concentration camp inmates, whether Jews or non-Jews, victims of political and racial persecution or common-law criminals, leave few illusions concerning the moral qualities of any race or class.

He does describe a few pitifully rare exceptions: real saints like the German doctor Benno Heller to whose memory he dedicates his book; humorous sophisticates like his Hungarian Jewish friend Aliego; or true innocents like the Gypsy child who at one time stole food for him. But it is significant that not one of these people survived the ordeals of the SS regime. In the bitter struggle for survival, only the toughest and the least scrupulous seemed able to escape extermination. It should be noted, however, that Laszlo makes a point of stressing the humanity and courage of many common-law criminals who, coming from an underworld that has its own primitive moral code, were often less demoralized by the SS regime than political prisoners who had never had to cope with such perplexities.

German publishers, reviewers, and readers have not yet felt the need, it seems, to corroborate or invalidate the more optimistic views now current by exposing themselves to one of the most remarkable pieces of concentration camp literature published in the past twelve years. Michel del Castillo's *Tanguy*, written in French and not yet published in any other language, tells the story of a nine-year-old boy, the son of a pusillanimous French bourgeois father and an irresponsible Spanish society woman, whose parents drift apart during the years of the Spanish Civil War. The child and his mother first escape from Spain to France, where they avoid internment but are later denounced (by the father) to the Vichy police. They then manage somehow to obtain their freedom. In the "free" zone of France (which the French Jewish humorist Tristan Bernard once called the "preoccupied" zone) the mother plans to escape with her child to England or Mexico, but via Spain. She crosses the Pyrenees in a clandestine convoy of refugees, mainly Jewish, leaving her child in Marseilles to join her in a later convoy. But the next convoy is rounded up by the Vichy police and the whole group, Jews and non-Jews, is shipped to Paris and from there deported to Auschwitz.

Michel del Castillo's description of Auschwitz (as it appeared to a ten-year-old who spent four years of his life there) surpasses in horror any literature of its kind. *Tanguy's* catalogue of terror begins with the recording of a devoted wife's reactions when she hears her husband being beaten and tortured by the Gestapo in the adjoining room. His next description of inferno tells how, in the sealed cattle-trucks

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packed with children who are being transported for days on end under the August sun without food, without water, without ventilation, and without sanitation, the ten-year-old Tanguy looks after a seven-year-old Jewish companion who finally dies in his arms.

In Auschwitz, Tanguy is fortunate enough to find a protector in one of those rare Germans of the kind Laszlo has also described. Günther, like Laszlo's Dr. Heller, is an anti-Nazi who has no illusions, but great resources of courage, an indomitable Prussian self-discipline, and the unsentimental generosity of the truly strong. But Günther is finally sent to the gas chamber, and Tanguy is then kept alive mainly by the memory of his protector, who had made him swear, as they parted, never to succumb to fatigue and despair, but to adhere to the morality of self-discipline that had so far kept them both alive.

*Tanguy* indeed begins just about where Anne Frank's diary was interrupted by the ominous knock on the door that tens of thousands of theater-goers in two continents have now heard. But del Castillo's novel—perhaps less fictional than the play based on Anne Frank's diary—continues beyond the liberation of its hero by Soviet troops. Because Tanguy is a child of presumably Spanish nationality, the Red Cross authorities have the bright idea of repatriating him by sending him back to Franco Spain. There, being a former political refugee, he is placed in a reformatory run by brutal clerics and experiences again some of the horrors of internment. Aided by a delinquent interned in the same reformatory, Tanguy manages to escape. (Again, as in Laszlo's account, it is a common-law criminal who proves to be an unusually loyal and courageous friend.) With the assistance of a liberal-minded physician, he manages to obtain admission to a Catholic orphanage where he at last experiences some loving-kindness and obtains an education. But he soon graduates and must then earn a living. His description of social conditions among industrial workers in Franco Spain—that paradise for Hilton-hotel tourists and NATO technical missions—resembles the accounts that Pückler-Muskau has left us of Birmingham and other British industrial centers in the heyday of Beau Brummel. Finally, Tanguy escapes to France, meets his father again, then his mother too. They fail him completely. The father, now married to a wealthy Frenchwoman, suspects his son of being a Communist and despises him for having become proletarianized. The mother, an active and thoroughly indoctrinated Communist, is incapable of understanding her child's distrust of all ready-made beliefs and authoritarian doctrines of government.

BOTH Laszlo and del Castillo thus agree in rejecting the notion of Germany's collective guilt: the real hero, both in *Ferien am Waldsee* and in *Tanguy*, is an anti-Nazi German internee, and the real villains, in both accounts, are ordinary human beings, whether guards or internees, Germans or even Jews who have allowed themselves to become brutalized and demoralized by the SS state. Both authors agree, moreover, in exonerating the common-law criminals of the onus of responsibility for the worst features of the camp regime. Indeed, they insist that these criminals were also victims of an inhuman and brutalizing system. Finally, they offer us scant hope of believing in the integrity of the average citizen in any society that is subjected to extreme pressures. The rare survivors of the SS camps who do not owe their lives to their own betrayals and crimes have little reason, it seems, to be anything but anarchists or Jansenists. Both authors have learned to trust, at most, only those few who are born to be saints and ready to accept any sacrifice on behalf of their fellow sufferers, however unworthy the latter may be.

In the preface to *La Guitare*, his second novel, del Castillo explains that *Tanguy* was mainly autobiographical, but that his writings are now more purely fictional. The theme of *La Guitare* is almost an allegory of the SS state. Its hero is a dwarf—a monster condemned by some trick of destiny or heredity to live in a kind of private concentration camp, victimized at all times by other human beings with whom he can never communicate on equal terms. In *Tanguy*, Castillo had described some atrocious instances of anti-Semitism practiced by non-Jewish concentration camp inmates in their relations with their Jewish fellow prisoners. It seems that man, however unfortunate, can always exploit the misfortunes of one even more utterly damned. Del Castillo has learned to consider society from a kind of negatively Jansenist point of view: the "elect," in his eyes, are the few who are destined to transcend their suffering by understanding that their tormentors are too

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numerous and too ignorant to be condemned. Though a Christian, del Castillo is thus, among all these authors, perhaps the most intrinsically Jewish in his attitude.

## Civil Liberties

COMMON SENSE AND THE FIFTH AMENDMENT. By SIDNEY HOOK. Criterion. 160 pp. $3.00.

FUNDAMENTAL LIBERTIES OF A FREE PEOPLE. By MILTON R. KONVITZ. Cornell University Press. 420 pp. $5.00.

*Reviewed by* MAURICE J. GOLDBLOOM

ALTHOUGH Sidney Hook and Milton R. Konvitz both deal with civil liberties, there is really very little overlapping in these two books. Professor Konvitz confines himself almost entirely to the liberties enumerated in the First Amendment and protected against state interference by the Fourteenth. Professor Hook deals primarily with the problems raised by that portion of the Fifth Amendment which provides that no person "shall be compelled in any criminal case to be a witness against himself." Only incidentally does he deal with other matters, and his comments on them are on the whole in the nature of asides, with little organic relation to his central thesis.

This thesis is that invocation of the Fifth Amendment offers a strong ground for suspicion that the invoker has something to hide, and throws grave doubt on his fitness for any position of trust, where the information he has refused to give is in a field relevant to that position. (Professor Hook would not, for instance, consider it any concern of the government if an atomic scientist pleaded the Fifth Amendment in regard to a question about involvement in adultery.) He effectively demolishes the idea that there is anything noble about refusing to answer on the grounds of possible self-incrimination, or that one can possibly vindicate a principle by such a plea. Here he makes the important distinction between refusal to answer on the ground of possible self-incrimination, and refusal based on a challenge to the right of an investigative agency to put the question under the First Amendment. And he also recognizes that a person's commitment to other values may override his duty to cooperate with an investigative agency, but only if he is prepared to face the consequences of his defiance. This is in the great tradition of those who have asserted the rights of conscience in the past: one vindicates one's principles by proclaiming them, not by hiding them.

But unfortunately Professor Hook has let the polemical origin of this book—it is based on articles he wrote for the *New Leader* in criticism of Dean Griswold's *The Fifth Amendment Today*—betray him into going considerably further than he needed to in order to make these very valid points, and to put forward some very questionable assertions, particularly in the legal and historical fields. Indeed he has shown that he possesses at least one qualification for membership of the Supreme Court—a fondness for *obiter dicta*. Some of these are a useful contribution to the fields with which they deal, even if their bearing on the use of the Fifth Amendment is only peripheral; thus his discussion of the relevance of Communist party membership to different types of employment is replete with relevant distinctions. (Perhaps because for understandable reasons he overestimates the importance of the teaching profession, he does not carry this same precision of analysis into his treatment of the problem of Communists as teachers; he would appear ready to apply the same rules to the college instructor in calculus as to the high school teacher of history.) But in other instances Professor Hook's dicta simply impart a quite unnecessary element of weakness to his presentation.

Thus, since he does not propose to remove the protection against self-incrimination in criminal cases, it is hard to see why he goes to considerable pains to criticize it. Both in form and effect, the use of the Fifth Amendment in such cases differs substantially from its use before investigative bodies. In a criminal case, the Fifth Amendment means that the prosecution cannot call the defendant to the stand, and it is up to him to decide whether he desires to testify in his own defense. While this is a consequence of the protection against self-incrimination, it does not require an assertion by the defendant that his testimony might incriminate him—perhaps just because such a plea might impress a jury as incriminating! There can be no question that a great number of completely innocent defendants refrain from taking the stand. A defendant may choose not to take the stand, as Professor Hook points out, because he has a criminal record which would prejudice the

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jury against him, and which the prosecutor can mention only if he takes the stand. Or he may refrain because of other facts—perhaps a change of name, or an adulterous relationship which a prosecutor might bring out in cross-examination in order to undermine the accused's credibility. Or he may simply refrain from fear that he would get rattled under cross-examination and make a bad impression on the jury.

ALL this is perfectly legitimate, and in no way an abuse of the privilege against self-incrimination. For Professor Hook is not correct when he says that "those who invoke the privilege against self-incrimination can *properly* do so only because there exists in fact some evidence which reasonable men would legitimately construe as indicating guilt." All that is required is that there be something—not necessarily evidence—which might, legitimately or illegitimately, be construed as reason for convicting him. And that is another matter altogether.

A defendant may also refrain from taking the stand because, under the decision in the *Remington* case, he in effect forfeits his protection against double jeopardy by doing so. In this case, the Supreme Court upset the conviction of William Remington on a charge of perjury because the indictment had been obtained from a grand jury whose foreman had a direct interest in seeing him convicted. But it upheld his subsequent conviction on a new charge of perjury, *based on his testimony in his own defense at his trial under the illegal indictment!*

The fear of an illegitimate prosecution for perjury is also a thoroughly understandable reason for refusing to testify before a Congressional committee or a grand jury, even if it is not a legally sound use of the privilege against self-incrimination. There have in recent years been altogether too many prosecutions of people—some of them certainly innocent, even if most were guilty—based on their denials of accusations against them. In some cases these prosecutions have utilized demonstrably incompetent evidence; in others, they have depended on testimony which was subsequently confessed or proven to be itself perjurious. Since it is exceedingly rare for a witness to be prosecuted for perjurious testimony *against* someone—I cannot recall a single case in this country in recent years—perjury prosecutions against accused individuals and defense witnesses can very easily become an engine of tyranny—whether they are aimed against Owen Lattimore or James Hoffa.

Indeed, there would seem to be a close relation between the treatment of perjury and the privilege against self-incrimination. Contrary to Professor Hook's impression, the punishment of perjury as a crime is a comparatively recent innovation. Roman and medieval law left it to divine vengeance; the Anglo-Saxon trial by compurgation—in which the decision went to the one who could get the most friends to swear to his story—involved perjury as a matter of course. The punishment of perjury in criminal cases seems to have been introduced into English law by the Court of Star Chamber under the Tudors. Most systems of law have recognized that a defendant cannot be expected to tell the truth if it will result in his conviction, unless he is forced to. Some systems have therefore refused to permit his testimony, others have relied on cross-examination and confrontation to elicit the truth from him against his will, while many have frankly or tacitly depended on torture to supply the necessary incentive.

The protection against self-incrimination is simply an acknowledgment of the fact that under normal circumstances a defendant's testimony against himself can only be obtained by inadmissible means. And while Professor Hook believes that the courts would find other ways to throw out extorted confessions if this protection did not exist, the fact is that even with its specific warrant they have met with howls of outrage when they did so. While I hope that Professor Hook is right in believing that the courts would, if the protection against self-incrimination were to be removed, twist other constitutional guarantees into a basis for disallowing confessions obtained by torture, I personally would not care to take the chance. As to the laws which prohibit torture by the authorities, they have been little more of a deterrent than those prohibiting wire-tapping and perjury on behalf of the prosecution. It is, after all, the police and prosecutors who enforce the law.

Nevertheless, the refusal to answer questions on grounds of possible self-incrimination inevitably creates a suspicion that the witness has something to hide. Professor Hook points out that independent evidence was already on record against most of the witnesses who pleaded possible self-incrimination before Con-

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gressional committees investigating Communism. But the period to which that evidence referred varied greatly. And because of the doctrine of waiver, which prevents a witness from answering one question of a series while pleading self-incrimination on another, what he is concealing is by no means indicated by the nature of the question. Hence, as Professor Hook recognizes, any procedure which provides for automatic dismissal for refusal to answer is likely to lead to injustice. Further investigation and some sort of hearing are therefore necessary in order to determine whether the person is actually concealing something, and whether, if he is, it is relevant to his qualifications for employment.

In short, the use of the Fifth Amendment gives grounds for suspicion and further investigation; how strong the suspicion is, and what one suspects, must depend on the specific circumstances.

Professor Konvitz's book is both a historical account of the practical application of the First Amendment freedoms, and a critical evaluation of recent developments in this field. As a survey of the field, it leaves little to be desired. It is comprehensive, well written, and on the whole extremely fair in its presentation of even those aspects of which Professor Konvitz is most critical. And his account of the adoption of the Bill of Rights helps to illuminate its significance.

In respect to freedom of religion, Professor Konvitz shows the gradual development of increasing protections for religious liberty, as well as the limitations to which it is still subject. Thus he is critical of "Sunday laws," which legally enforce the Christian Sabbath, as well as of the Supreme Court's approval of the New York "released time program," under which children are permitted to leave public schools early in order to receive religious instruction. But in discussing state enforcement of canon law, he says that "often it is not possible or desirable to draw a sharp line between the things that are God's and the things that are Caesar's. In the interest of maintaining the wall of separation, it becomes necessary at times to assimilate to the church or God things that ordinarily seem to belong to the state or Caesar; for human beings find that it is indispensable for their religious faith to have outward symbols like churches, cathedrals, cemeteries, and other tangible goods, which become consecrated vessels for spiritual use. . . . Church and state are separate; but to keep them separate it becomes necessary, at times, to treat them *as if* they were not separate, and the state says to the church: 'Thy will be my will.'"

In his treatment of the "clear and present danger doctrine," Professor Konvitz seems somewhat inconsistent. He analyzes it and traces its history in such a way as to demonstrate very cogently that it was in fact never really more than a literary phrase, originally used to justify the denial of free speech in a case where no real danger existed. But then he describes its abandonment in 1951 in the *Dennis* case—in which the Supreme Court upheld the conviction of Communist leaders under the Smith Act—as the loss of a precious jewel. Rather, it seems to me that it was always not merely useless but dangerous; it simply served as a formula whereby the Justices could excuse themselves for following the election returns rather than the Constitution. That in the *Dennis* case they found new formulae with which to accomplish the same end seems of minor significance.*

The whole question of judicial review is, of course, an extremely complex one; certainly there are grounds for criticizing it, as there are for preferring unwritten to written constitutions. But if the rights guaranteed in a written constitution are to have meaning, they must be enforceable against the legislature and the executive. And almost all democracies established in recent years have felt that human rights were safer under the American system of written guarantees enforced by independent constitutional courts than under the British system of legislative supremacy.

This is true in spite of the fact that, as Professor Konvitz points out, no act of Congress has ever been invalidated on the basis of the First Amendment. But it should be noted that the courts have given it effect in another way; they have frequently interpreted acts and resolutions of Congress in such a way that—whatever their legislative intent—they were brought into line with the Constitution. This they have

*It is worth noting that in *Davis v. Beason* (1890), which Professor Konvitz does not discuss, the Supreme Court held that despite the guarantee of freedom of religion, it was a crime for Mormons not merely to *practice* polygamy, but to *advocate* it. This would seem to go even further than the restrictions sanctioned by the series of cases from *Schenck* through *Dennis*.

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done under the doctrine that if a law is constitutional when interpreted one way but not when interpreted another, it must be given the meaning which will save it.

There are, of course, many specific points on which others will differ with Professor Konvitz. Thus, his discussion of the right of the government to dismiss employees on security grounds does not convince this reviewer that, whatever the unwisdom and injustice of many present procedures, they violate any constitutional right. But in general his analysis is illuminating even where it does not convince; I do not think there is any better book available in its field.

## "In Sich"

FUN MEIN GANTZER MEA (Of All My Labors). By JACOB GLATSTEIN. CYCO Book Publishing Co. 393 pp. $7.50.

*Reviewed by* IRVING HOWE

FROM the moment some forty-five years ago that a group of Yiddish writers known as *Die Yunge* began to proclaim the need for literary cosmopolitanism and aesthetic individuality, which for them meant primarily a break from traditional folksong rhythms and social didacticism, Yiddish poetry in America has been characterized by a high level of achievement. The work of *Die Yunge* appeared at a time when American poetry was reaching a brilliant climax, and since themes of deracination and experimentalist techniques could be found in both, it was sometimes assumed that the American poets had significantly influenced the Yiddish. But this seems very doubtful. Yiddish writers have almost always been more dependent on the past of their own culture, even when rebelling against it, than upon alien contemporaries. Though often borrowing devices from other literatures, they have usually remained indifferent to the deeper intentions behind these devices and have continued to go their own, essentially Jewish, way.

Both the traditionalists and iconoclasts among the Yiddish writers have never really enjoyed the possibilities for literary experiment that other writers have. When, for example, *Die Yunge* rejected the social themes of much Yiddish poetry written earlier in this country, it was a rejection more vehement in tone than assured in content. Individuality, eccentricity, and estrangement could of course be found among many Yiddish poets; but simply because they wrote, because they *had* to write, in Yiddish, they could not abide with personal impulses and problems. It was their fate to return to those themes of collective destiny which neither a literary program nor a private wish could remove from their consciousness.

In the early 20's another group of poets called the *In Sich,* or Introspectionist school, tried still harder to discard the "provincialism" of early Yiddish poetry. These writers turned deliberately to free verse and to subjects, such as cosmopolitan isolation, that were not at all unique to Jewish experience; yet with time they too found that their rebelliousness counted for very little beside the fact that they were unavoidably caught up in the tragedy of Yiddish as a culture. So imperious is this fate of Yiddish writers that there seems almost no point in asking whether its literary consequences were good or bad.

One of the best *In Sich* poets, Jacob Glatstein, began by writing modernist verse that displayed motifs such as the difficulty of sustaining a personal self in the modern city and the pain of inescapable transience in human life. Not only was the early Glatstein free from Jewish sentimentalism and apologetics; in naming his first book *Jacob Glatstein* he flaunted his claim to uniqueness, his desire to be considered not as a "spokesman" but as a poet. Soon enough, however, and one suspects almost before he knew it, Glatstein was returning to the perennial subject—the great overarching subject that is both the glory and the curse—of Yiddish literature: the nature of Jewish survival, the meaning of Jewish identity, which is to say, the problem of justice.

Now, a good many years later, Glatstein is an acknowledged major figure in Yiddish literature—a superb poet, fine critic, and author of discursive prose narrative—who has recently celebrated his sixtieth birthday by publishing a volume of collected poems. In terms of craft, whatever it was that made him seem revolutionary within the Yiddish tradition thirty-five years ago remains revolutionary: his use of the first person singular not as a convention of the lyric but as a means of direct personal revelation, his capacity for writing long "unpoetic" lines which bring to Yiddish poetry a rare cognitive power, his avoidance of folk rhetoric, his gift for dramatizing reflective materials within compact stanza forms, and his readiness

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to subordinate the melodic line of his verse to the thrust and urgency of his thought. All of this undoubtedly makes him a "modern" poet who has helped enlarge the area of technical possibilities open to later Yiddish poets; but if one examines his work as a whole, one must conclude that Glatstein has always stood close to the center of the Yiddish literary tradition. He is a poet who has quarreled, as all Yiddish poets must, with God and fate. He has celebrated, yet not idyllicized, half-forgotten places and vanished styles of life. He has written out his despair over the incomprehensibility of the martyrdom. And in the end, what else can a Yiddish poet do?

In Glatstein's earliest poems, which now hardly seem as startling as when they first appeared, one finds a young writer struggling to affirm his choice of self-consciousness. Bits of childhood memory, associations of words, emotions of "quiet youthful unrest," sounds of the city at night, notations of things seen, syntactical plays and variations—these come together in tentative structures, mainly with the purpose of creating surprise and freshness. As it now seems, however, the early work is less an achievement than an announcement.

The achievement comes a bit later, in the mid-20's. Here, in poems collected in Glatstein's second volume, one finds the long reflective lines that led the Israeli critic Benjamin Hrushovski to speak of his verse as "tantamount to slow, weighty, well-considered speech." The description is excellent, particularly because it moves from aspects of technique to a sense of the poet's intention and tone. Through his long and lingering lines—sometimes, to my inexpert ear, tending to collapse into prosiness—Glatstein is able to give his verse more intellectual body and greater dialectical tension than the traditional Yiddish lyric could generally allow. By encouraging both the phrase and the line to follow not the lulling metronomic beat of the traditional lyric but the autonomous movement of a particular argument or emotion, Glatstein encompasses in his poetry what modern American critics sometimes call "the problematic" and Yiddish has less portentously labeled *chochma*.

Nor does his growing expertness appear only in reflective poems. In poems such as "Twilight" Glatstein has mastered the lyric that does not blatantly "sing" (harder to do in Yiddish than in English), and in a magnificent poem called "Evening Bread" he establishes complete control over the dramatic vignette: an "I and a she and another she" share the evening meal, tense with pain, passing the knife from hand to hand. "She takes the knife and looks at me and her, / Two dead guests sitting silent at the table / And from the heart of her the sharp knife sings / A song of peril at evening bread."

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At this stage of his development Glatstein's virtuosity is so exuberant that he is driven to try his hand at almost every poetic genre except the long verse narrative. And it is astonishing at how many he succeeds: a curious dialogue in which as a sheer tour de force he mimics the posture of Chinese theater while infusing the poem with attitudes that can only be called Jewish; a brilliant pictorial vignette that recalls the early Wallace Stevens; clever symbolist lyrics which embody, with new assurance, the personal themes of his earlier work. And all the while Glatstein's Yiddish becomes stronger, simpler, and more fluent, being neither inflated with that gassy rhetoric which is often a curse of Yiddish writing nor collapsed into the diminutive quaintness which is another curse.

The poet that we have here—roughly speaking, until 1933—is a distinguished writer, but he is not yet Glatstein at his most troubled or best. Once the agony of the European Jews begins, Glatstein becomes, in the most serious sense of the term, a national artist. Not an apologist or propagandist, but a writer for whom *there can no longer be a choice of subject matter*. In whatever form, his poems now compose themselves into a sustained threnody. With a terrible ferocity he bids "good night . . . to the big stinking world" and returns in

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spirit to the "ghetto," to the kerosene lamps, trailing gaberdines, "the eternal October." This is declamatory poetry, and we have been trained during the past few decades to distrust the poetry of statement, to say nothing of the poetry of imprecation at which Glatstein also excels; but I can only say that, whatever the judgment of some hypothetical and unexcited eternity, these poems, even when they verge on the strident, are written with enormous skill and power. In the original Yiddish, they are simply not to be denied.

Since the martyrdom cannot itself form a poetic subject, Glatstein falls back upon a major strategy of Yiddish writing: the quarrel with God. It is a remarkable strength of Yiddish culture that even for the skeptic God remains a living force, a vital power, within the world for which he writes. Perhaps even more so than for the believer; since the skeptic struggles and suffers and, horrified by the world, must constantly renew his quarrel with a God in whom he does not believe. The skeptical Yiddish poet has no one else to talk to, and that is why in Glatstein's poems God is apostrophized, caressed, denounced, and excoriated: they are on good terms, this modernist poet and the traditional God, *because they owe each other explanations.*

"The Torah we received at Mount Sinai / And at Lublin we returned it. / Corpses do not praise God . . ." begins one poem. "Who will dream of you / Who remember you?" he taunts God in another poem. And then, in a spasm of reconciliation, he sees God as a lonely old Jew ("The God of my disbelief is lovely . . .") and thinks of him as a defeated companion: "There He sits, my friend, clasping my arm / And sharing with me his last bite of food."

It is extraordinarily moving to watch this poet struggle from poem to poem, knowing in advance that each response must fail and exhausting himself in speaking to a God who does not answer. With what is surely the saddest and most authentic of responses, he ends still another poem by murmuring: "Loving, precious and holy Name / Never have we learned to understand." And beyond that there is only his "Ghetto Song," an incomparable lyric in which a father, in some nameless ghetto, muses over a sleeping child.

At roughly the time he was writing these poems of anger and sorrow, Glatstein was also composing his masterwork: a group of dramatic monologues spoken by the Hasidic sage, the Bratzlaver, to his scribe. Marvelously free and rich in their Yiddish, loving and easy in tone, these poems form an implicit balance to the poems about the martyrdom.

Criticism of poetry without citations in the original is a dubious thing; the only alternative is testimony. Though he lives in a country where only a handful of people know his name and fewer still his work, Glatstein is a poet who ranks with such celebrated American poets as Robinson and Frost. As a craftsman he is more agile than any recent American poet except Eliot and Stevens; he is not so predictable in tone as Robinson, or in manner as Frost, or in scope as Marianne Moore. If Glatstein wrote in any language but Yiddish, critical studies and translations would now be under way. As it is . . .

The least, then, that can be said by one reader living beyond the circle of Yiddishism is that his work has provided so rare an experience that I wish simply to express my gratitude to Jacob Glatstein.

## A Great Jewish Leader

LOUIS MARSHALL: CHAMPION OF LIBERTY. Selected Papers and Addresses. Edited by CHARLES REZNIKOFF. Jewish Publication Society. 2 Vols. 1196 pp. $10.00.

*Reviewed by* MILTON R. KONVITZ

It is one hundred and one years since Louis Marshall—one of the founders of the American Jewish Committee and its president from 1912 to 1929—was born and almost thirty years since he died, and a new generation that knows him not has grown up; but these two volumes of Marshall's selected letters, memoranda, briefs, and addresses—competently edited, attractively published, and ably introduced (by Oscar Handlin)—remove any excuse for future ignorance. The size of the volumes is, admittedly, formidable—the work is almost as long as *War and Peace;* yet the lasting importance of Marshall's accomplishments amply warrants the time it takes to read the six hundred thousand words.

One reason for our engaging interest is that Marshall is not "dated"; the problems he faced are, by and large, the same ones we face. The

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scenes have changed but the characters and the plot seem to persist. Another reason is that the hero of this work was a man of principle: one only rarely sees him acting impulsively, petulantly, or on a small scale. His antagonists were men or issues or movements that challenged his highest and deepest resources, and he responded to them with great intelligence and skill and out of deeply rooted convictions. Time and again one feels that here was a whole man acting and reacting.

And the stage for his action was large—national policies, international conflicts, catholic Jewry; almost as large as the world itself. While we know that Marshall had an intensive family life and that he enjoyed an extremely lucrative law practice, his absorption was in grave and great public issues, and we see almost nothing of the man's "petty pace from day to day," of the walking shadow that "struts and frets his hour upon the stage." We see only the fast pace of the man, one who seemed always ready to run a race. He was made of the stuff of princes great in state or church.

Louis Marshall was a great Jewish leader. But his leadership, let me hasten to add, was a by-product of his Jewishness: he did not seek to become or to be a leader, but he did seek to be a Jew: he would gladly have renounced his leadership and even have lost his life sooner than to be false to Judaism. It was Judaism that seemed to be his heart and his mind; it was the very center, the essence, of his being, his existence, and his life. Of course Marshall was a great lawyer, one of the greatest constitutional lawyers we have had; and it was as a great lawyer that Samuel Untermyer brought him from Syracuse to his firm in New York when Marshall was thirty-eight years of age. But once he was settled in his new law firm and new home, the lawyer was absorbed by the Jew, and it is apparent as one reads his papers that his best, most eager thought went to the issues that touched him as a Jew.

Marshall was not an abstract thinker, not a philosopher. His thoughts came out of the stress and strain of his actions. There was no comprehensive plan, no intricate analysis; but there was a central loyalty from which thought flowed as tributaries. Marshall's "secret," "the general intention" of his work, as Henry James would put it, "the string the pearls were strung on, the buried treasure, the figure in the carpet," was his Jewishness. This Jewishness expressed itself in numerous ways.

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For one thing, Marshall had a keen sense of what traditionally would be called *Klal Yisroel,* or the catholicity of Israel. It was basically, with Marshall, not an intellectual conception but a sense that led him to extend a loving embrace to every Jew and everything Jewish. He was probably, with Horace M. Kallen, the most radically pluralistic Jew in our society. It was unqualifiedly true that to Marshall nothing Jewish was alien. And he was willing, and even eager, to accept the multiplicity of Jewish expressions and phenomena on the terms they offered, each with its own character, its own richness of meaning. He did not want them to change, to give up their unique qualities, though he did expect them to constitute an *e pluribus unum,* a catholic Israel united in such a way that the *pluribus,* the diversity, remained, was not swallowed up by an engulfing *Gleichschaltung* that left only the *unum.*

Thus, Marshall was for many years President of the Reform Temple Emanu-El, and at the same time chairman of the board of the Conservative Jewish Theological Seminary. "A sincere adherent to Orthodox or to Reform Judaism is, in my opinion," he said, "equally a Jew, and neither has the moral right

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to disregard the other, nor has either the right to impose his particular views upon the other. . . . So long as both conscientiously carry out their principles, they both promote and advance the cause of religion, or morality, of good citizenship and of Judaism." He lived, then, by the rule of "Live and let live."

But he did more than merely let live—he went out of his way to help the other institution, the other point of view, the other culture to survive and live and flourish.

Although head of a temple, he disliked the word for having an element of snobbery about it. The word "synagogue" pleased him better. So, too, though his temple was affiliated with the Union of American *Hebrew* Congregations, he preferred the word "Jewish." In part his objection to the more fancy or euphemistic terms was a response to the fact that they tended to suggest a class division between temple Hebrews and synagogue Jews, between German Hebrews and their East European co-religionists. Not for one moment would Marshall concede the legitimacy of any such division. "I do not know what you mean," he wrote in a letter, "by the better class of Jews. . . . I am myself radical to this extent, that I do not believe in classes. . . . I do not consider myself better than any other Jew. . . ."

Other Jews have, of course, expressed similar ideas, but the greatness of Marshall in part lay in the fact that these were not merely ideas to him; he acted them out. Thus, for example, though Yiddish had not been spoken in his parents' home, as a mature person he learned to speak and read Yiddish, and he read, and often enjoyed, the Yiddish newspapers. He felt a close kinship with the Jewish immigrants from Russia, Poland, and other East European countries, and he wanted to understand them and their ways of thought and life, and he wanted to communicate with them directly and in their own words. He invested his own money in a Yiddish newspaper, and when a Yiddish newspaper found itself in trouble with the Post Office, he intervened successfully on behalf of the publisher.

This attitude, this respect for the different, also comes out clearly in his relation to Zionism. He said over and over that he was no political Zionist and that he did not expect a Jewish state to be created in Palestine. "I cannot, however," he wrote, "overlook the fact that there are many high-minded men who believe that the opportunity should be given to the Jews who desire to do so to be enabled to establish their home in Palestine. . . . There is no likelihood that there ever will be a Jewish State in Palestine. There is, however, a strong possibility that, as a result of united action, an outlet may be found in Palestine for the persecuted and suffering Jews of Eastern Europe. There is no other outlet for them. The doors of Western Europe have been closed against them. Our recent immigration law [this was written in 1921] indicates that the opportunities that in the past have been afforded them of establishing themselves in this country are to be taken away from them. Eastern Europe is bankrupt. Where shall they go if they desire to better their condition? What objection can there be, therefore, to an effort to establish for them a home in the land of their fathers and to enable them . . . to build up the waste places of the Holy Land and to bring about a renaissance?" In these and in numerous other passages one sees a basic human love overriding doctrinaire dictates of the mind.

I SHALL cite one more instance, in some ways perhaps the most significant of all: his interest in Jewish education.

In 1914, at a time when most Jewish leaders thought of Jewish education only in terms of the Sunday school or the Talmud Torah, Louis Marshall lent his support to Samson Benderly to organize a bureau of Jewish education in New York City, that later became the Jewish Education Committee; and in 1920 he reached the conclusion, as he wrote to Herbert H. Lehman, that the principal need of American Jewry was the spread and strengthening of Jewish education, and he began to plan a national movement toward the achievement of this purpose, that would have an annual budget of millions of dollars. He saw Jewish education as a communal rather than as a personal or congregational or partisan responsibility, and he wanted to rally for it the strongest elements that would work as national forces and that would represent all points of view. He envisioned an organization like the American Association for Jewish Education, which did not in fact come into existence until two decades later.

To stimulate others, he himself set up a fund of $150,000 for the religious education of Jewish girls in New York. In 1920 he wrote that he considered the problem of Jewish education more important than hospitals, orphan

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asylums, and similar charities. If the Jews did not deal with this problem at once, and with a broad, comprehensive, and generous plan, the consequences would be "calamitous."

Taking his stance as a Jew, Marshall saw Israel as a rich complex of diversities, and the American nation as a union of differences. He, in each instance, respected and loved the diversities, the differences, the pluralities. He was not afraid of the bigoted charge of divided loyalties: he shouted his multiple loyalties from the housetops, for he knew that at his center was a single, all-encompassing, imminent and yet transcendent value—his loyalty to Judaism.

## The Egyptian Official

BUREAUCRACY AND SOCIETY IN MODERN EGYPT. By MORROE BERGER. Princeton University Press. 231 pp. $4.75.

*Reviewed by* A. V. SHERMAN

SOCIAL and political studies by Western authors on the Middle East are as a rule handicapped by emotional involvement and romanticism. Mr. Berger's book, the first of a series of social studies by the Department of Oriental Studies at Princeton, marks a welcome antidote to these tendencies. It is the product of social science techniques applied to a Middle East area-study by a "general" sociologist (not a trained Orientalist) helped out by area-specialists, and aided by a staff of some thirty Egyptian social scientists in his field work.

The book falls more or less into two parts: a general analytical and comparative study of the Egyptian civil service in its wider social and political context, and a more intensive supporting "depth" study of the background and attitudes of a selected sample of 250 senior civil servants. Mr. Berger's general tone is indicated by the following statement: "It has been easier for 'under-developed areas' to expand their educational facilities, especially in liberal arts and law, than to expand the economic opportunities for those who use those facilities. The resultant pressure for government jobs has swelled the ranks of the civil service far beyond the point of real need. This is true for Egypt."

When Lord Cromer (who was to govern Egypt for the quarter of a century following its occupation in 1882) introduced a system whereby acquisition of the school-leaving certificate automatically conferred the right to government employment, he considered that the advantages offered by this arrangement in building up the lower and medium ranks of the civil service and encouraging Egyptians to seek a secular education outweighed the difficulties that it might cause in a more distant future. Once introduced, the system soon gained a momentum of its own. By the 1920's, when Egyptian governments took over fuller control of internal affairs, the process was to become practically self-perpetuating. A substantial proportion of Egypt's educated classes were in government employ, and most students were working with a government post in view.

This book brings out the importance of the civil service as an avenue of social mobility. Whereas some 40 per cent of Mr. Berger's senior civil servants were sons of civil servants —producing characteristics of an "inbred social class," as he calls it—another 25 per cent were the sons of peasants or small traders, i.e., a higher proportion came from the country's lowest socio-economic class than is the case with the senior grades of American, British, or French civil service. Among the medium- and lower-grade officials the proportion of sons of peasants and other poor families is of course much higher. Indeed it was taken for granted that a poor but talented lad would aspire to a civil service job, and nothing else. Any attempt to break the vicious circle of expanded educational facilities, lowered standards, and swollen bureaucracy was therefore resented as "reactionary," or as preventing the sons of the poor and small men from rising in the world.

Mr. Berger estimates that by the late 40's the government was employing a third of all those who had completed primary education, nearly half of those with secondary education, and over three-quarters of those who had obtained a university degree. The number of civil service posts requiring a primary, secondary, or higher education more than tripled between 1950 and 1955. The number of such officials was estimated at 150,000 in 1954, a higher percentage of the working population

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than is employed in similar posts in Britain and America. By the early 50's, close to half of Egypt's swollen budget went to salaries and emoluments to civil servants, as against less than 10 per cent in Britain.

THE system's disastrous effects on education were to leave a lasting mark on the character and outlook of civil servants and intellectuals, and indirectly on political events. The direct link between examination certificate and government job "put rote learning in the place of a spirit of enquiry and development of the intellect at all levels of the over-crowded Egyptian education system," with its underpaid and regimented staffs. On several occasions the authorities were forced to lower the examination standards, sometimes after publication of the results, by pressure from outraged families whose sons had studied for several years, often at great sacrifice, only to find themselves "deprived" of the right to a government post which had been the sole object of their study.

As time went on the system brought nemesis on the bureaucrats themselves. Successive governments trying to reconcile expanding payrolls with limited budgets, economized at the expense of cost-of-living bonuses, thereby allowing continuous inflation to erode the real wages of civil servants. This constant decline in their living standards, never very high in the first place, increased their jealousy of landowners, industry, commerce, and the free professions, who as a general rule managed to float on the crest of the inflationary wave.

In his study of the 250 senior officials, Mr. Berger has been surprisingly successful in catching the "feel" of the Egyptian official, of his combined discontent and resignation, his sweeping denunciations of everyone and everything (including himself), followed by despairing abdication of responsibility, throwing the ball back to the eternal "they." Most of the interviewees, especially those under forty-five, admitted that they would gladly leave government service if they could find better conditions elsewhere with the same security. Underpaid (at least in comparison to their expectations), balked by favoritism, irked by routine and lack of scope for initiative, they feel that the prestige and well-being of the civil servant have been declining during the past twenty years. Willing to blame this on everything but their own undue increase in numbers, they cast round for objects of resentment, and find them without difficulty.

Mr. Berger's study confirms the impression of Western and Egyptian critics that the Egyptian civil servant is "a rather timid official fearful of his superiors and unwilling to use even such personal initiative as is permitted (even if not encouraged)." Unlike their French counterparts who reacted to ministerial instability by taking over many high policy-making functions, the Egyptian senior civil servants virtually abdicated responsibility.

Thence the vacuum which gave the military its chance in 1952. Since Mr. Berger's study was planned and carried out in 1952-54, before Nasserism had taken any clear shape, he wisely avoids committing himself on the consequences of the new dispensation. The effect on the existing bureaucratic structure of imposing a political leadership of army officers and their followers, several thousand strong, would make a fascinating study. But such a study would require further development away from the Weberian theory of bureaucracy to which Mr. Berger still adheres. Whereas he distinguishes only between bureaucracies working within an impersonal legal framework and those which serve as a nexus of personal power, a different type altogether—and one that can be found in Communist states and in the old Ottoman empire—has come to the fore in Nasserism: a bureaucracy and political ruling class combined.

If one may judge from *Bureaucracy and Society in Modern Egypt*, further publications in this series will be worth looking forward to.

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BOOK REVIEWERS IN THIS ISSUE

EDOUARD RODITI is an American poet and critic who has been living for some years in Paris.

MAURICE J. GOLDBLOOM is the author of *American Security and Freedom* (1954).

MILTON R. KONVITZ is professor of law and professor of industrial and labor relations at Cornell.

IRVING HOWE is associate professor of English at Brandeis. He was co-editor (with Eliezer Greenberg) of *A Treasury of Yiddish Literature*.

A. V. SHERMAN, a free-lance writer living in Israel, contributed "The Social Roots of Nasser's Egypt" to our November 1957 issue.

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# This *I Believe*

## R. C. ZAEHNER*

"*UNTIL* recently toleration has not been a European virtue, and in the matter of persecution Christians have a richer heritage of purblind violence than has any other religion, with the possible exception of Islam when it fell under Turkish domination. Religious persecution in the East, however, is, in comparison, almost unknown. The reasons for this would seem to be that that half of humanity which derives its religion from the Semites believes that God has revealed the truth and that this truth is vitally important. It matters more than anything else. The other half of humanity, whose religious outlook derives so largely from India, on the other hand, does not believe that absolute truth has been delivered by God to mankind at any particular time or place. It is really all a matter of one's point of view. Religions may seem to vary enormously, but when all is said and done, are they not really just different paths leading to the same goal? There is really nothing much to get excited about: let each man practise his own cult and leave others to carry on in their own ways. Such reasoning was typical of Hindu thinking in the classical period during which the great epics were written, and it is largely typical of Hindu thinking today. It is commendable and it is 'modern'; it is humane; it is human; it is not divine."

*"TWO CHOSEN PEOPLES"
(The first of three talks by R. C. Zaehner)
THE LISTENER,
published weekly by the BBC, London, England
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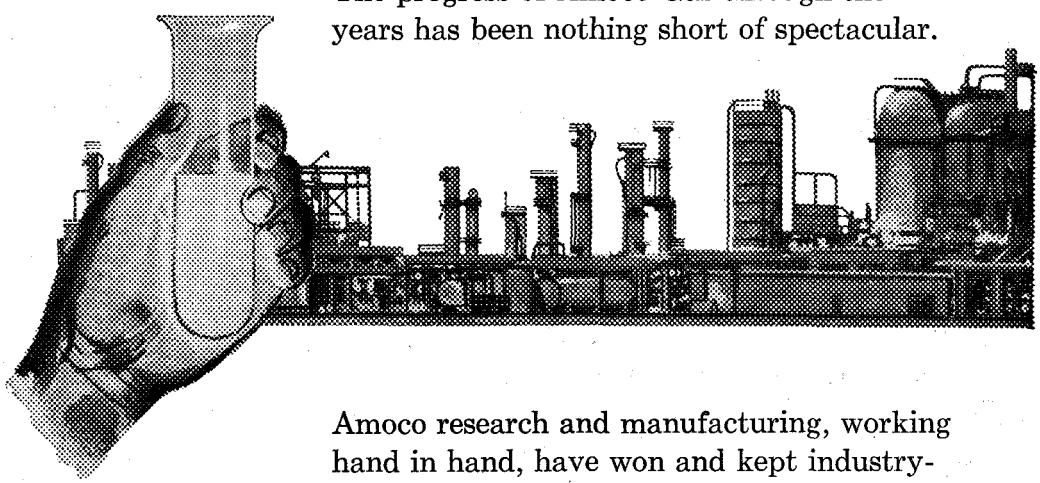

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